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

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

**Eighteenth session**

**Kasane, Republic of Botswana**

**4 to 9 December 2023**

**Item 4 of the provisional agenda:**

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

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| **Decision required:** paragraph 6 |

1. This document contains the summary records of the seventeenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, from 28 November to 3 December 2022.
2. One thousand two hundred participants registered for the session, including delegations from twenty-four States Parties Members of the Committee, 105 States Parties not Members of the Committee, two States not party to the Convention, one organization of the United Nations (UN) system, three intergovernmental organizations (other than UN), 111 accredited non-governmental organizations, five category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO, and 34 press/media entities.
3. The session was conducted in three languages: English and French (the two working languages of the Committee), as well as in Spanish.
4. The Living Heritage Entity of UNESCO provided the Secretariat for the meeting.
5. The elected Members of the Bureau of the seventeenth session of the Committee were:

 Chairperson: H.E. Mr Samir Addahre (Morocco)

 Vice-Chairpersons: Switzerland, Czechia, Panama, Republic of Korea and Botswana

 Rapporteur: Mr Ramiro Maurice Silva Rivera (Peru)

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

**DRAFT DECISION 18.COM 4**

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/23/18.COM/4,
2. Adopts the summary records of the Committee’s seventeenth session contained in this document.

*The summary records have been drafted based on the transcript of the statements made by the participants during the seventeenth 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 SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

*[Monday, 28 November 2022, morning session]*

**ITEM 1 OF THE AGENDA:**

**OPENING**

 **Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/INF.1*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.1-EN.docx)

1. The session began with a [royal message](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Message_from_King_of_Morocco_EN_FR_AR.pdf) from His Majesty King Mohammed VI to the participants of the seventeenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage organized in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.
2. His Excellency Mr Mohamed Hajoui, **General Secretary of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco**, read out the royal message in Arabic.
3. The **Director-General of UNESCO**, Ms Audrey Azoulay, welcomed the ministers, Members of the Committee, delegates, experts and friends to Rabat for this seventeenth session of the Committee. She was especially pleased to see the strong participation of experts, NGO representatives and institutions linked to living heritage, as well as members of the communities, the bearers and practitioners of these practices. She addressed warmest thanks to the Moroccan authorities, particularly to the Minister of Culture, for the opening session the previous evening, which featured the magnificent diversity of Moroccan intangible heritage, from the Tbourida to the Gnaoua. Rabat, a city at the crossroads of many cultures, was inscribed as World Heritage in 2012 and celebrated in 2022 as both an African and Islamic cultural capital. The preservation and liveliness of heritage in Rabat is in large part a result of the commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. The Director General of UNESCO expressed sincere thanks to His Majesty the King for his commitment, not only to culture, but also to the full scope of UNESCO’s mandate and for multilateral action in the service of peace. The 2003 Convention will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2023. Although it is one of the youngest conventions, it is the one that celebrates the relationship of symbolism linked with the history of humanity. Despite its youth, the Convention has already achieved great things. In less than two decades, it has given another dimension to culture, in a sense reinventing the notion of heritage. His Majesty’s message reminded the delegates that the heritage of humanity is no longer seen only in terms of monuments or natural sites, even though they are admired and well known, from Versailles to the Taj Mahal from Machu Picchu to the Great Wall of China. It also considers another fundamental heritage made up of traditions, festivals and gestures that are transmitted from generation to generation, and which provide a glimpse into the most intimate ways of living, crystallized to create social practices. Behind each of these practices, a whole world and culture unfold, comprising centuries of knowledge and exchanges, which are embodied in living and practised memory.
4. The **Director-General of UNESCO** spokeof the Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna in Marrakech, a precursor of intangible cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO and the entire Arab-Muslim civilization, known for its knowledge and history, as reflected in Arabic calligraphy. It is the memory of family celebrations, of newly acquired freedom, of rediscovered dignity, which can also be found in Haiti’s Joumou soup, inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (the Representative List) in 2021. When the Committee meets to examine these inscriptions, it is taking giant leaps forward, like those of the great Malian intellectual Amadou Hampâté Bâ, a great friend and fellow traveller of UNESCO. In 1960, he spoke in UNESCO to ask that ‘the safeguarding of oral traditions be considered as an operation of urgent necessity, in the same way as the safeguarding of the monuments of Nubia’. Today, the Committee can be legitimately proud of the Convention, this living concept of heritage that has become near universal with 180 States Parties. The Convention, which was recognized in the [Final Declaration of Ministers of Culture](https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT_EN_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION_FINAL_1.pdf) at the MONDIACULT 2022 Conference in September 2022, has broadcast a new understanding of heritage, leading many countries to adopt new legislation in this area, and public policies that were hard to imagine previously. It is an understanding of intangible heritage that is inseparable from other instruments, and which recognizes tangible heritage, the diversity of contemporary cultural expressions, and underwater heritage, all of which must be understood as a whole. It gives rise to a new ethic of heritage, with many aspects of the same idea now brought together, as they are intimately linked in extraordinary places like Rabat and Delphi, where a few days earlier UNESCO celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention.
5. The **Director-General of UNESCO** remarked that the Committee could be proud of this success, but it cannot stop. Year after year, one should ask oneself whether one is staying true to the spirit of this Convention, which is at its heart of this fundamental text embodied in the spirit of safeguarding. There is still much to do. There are still knowledge and many practices, shaped over centuries, to recognize and promote, which is often the best pathway to preservation. The Secretariat has increased its efforts to support African nominations, and this could be seen in the more than ten nominations the Committee will examine in 2023. The Director General of UNESCO was very happy with the announcement made by His Majesty on the new centre for the safeguarding of intangible heritage to soon be established in Morocco, with its global and African outreach. The spirit of the 2003 Convention, and probably its most original feature, is its unwavering determination to keep these traditions alive. This means being inspired by them and understanding what they bring to the world, far removed from folklorization or freezing them in time. On the contrary, these traditions can be valuable resources to help tackle major issues of our time. One example of intangible heritage as a precious resource is in the framework of global warming and the preservation of biodiversity. Faced with this immense challenge of our times, true gems of knowledge and understanding are waiting to be rediscovered and better explored. She was delighted to note that one-third of nominations in this session were directly linked to nature, whether involving environmentally friendly farming practices, the use of natural materials or traditional indigenous knowledge about nature and animals. This is a record. So much so that the Committee’s experts regard this Rabat session as a *green* cycle, in a country that has inscribed its knowhow of argan trees on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The spirit of this Convention, as with the other culture Conventions of UNESCO, is based on consensus and dialogue, and respect for scientific opinion, a fundamental prerequisite. The Director General of UNESCO was confident that the Committee will fully take into account the recommendations of the experts, as it has always done. She concluded with the words of Moroccan novelist, Nadia Chafik, with which she evokes the transmission of living but also reinvented traditions: ‘what the roots are to the cedar, what the perfume is to the rose’. She wished the delegates a successful session.
6. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO**, Mr Ernesto Ottone, welcomed all the delegates to this seventeenth session of the Committee in Rabat, a UNESCO World Heritage site. He expressed sincere thanks to the Moroccan authorities for their warm welcome and hospitality. After many months of preparation, they had created an excellent working environment for this session. After two long years of online meetings and a hybrid format, it was a pleasure to meet again in person. He remarked on the wealth of Morocco’s living heritage, which delegates had experienced during the opening ceremony the previous evening. He remarked on the Committee’s work in this session, with twenty items on the agenda. The Committee would examine a series of nominations to the Lists of the Convention, periodic reports and other reports submitted by States Parties, as well as the 2003 Convention’s initiative for sustainable development. It would also elect new members of the Evaluation Body. In addition, a number of interesting side events,[[1]](#footnote-2) meetings, information sessions and exhibitions had also been organized, which began the previous day with the discussion on ‘Living heritage and climate change’ organized by the ICH NGO Forum. The session would continue into the evening with a discussion on ‘Intangible cultural heritage and intellectual property’ organized by Morocco and UNESCO Headquarters. Other events focused on ‘Indigenous living heritage’ in Colombia, ‘Safeguarding living heritage in urban contexts’ and ‘the role of women in the transmission of living heritage’. The Secretariat was also pleased to be joined by living heritage bearers, experts, NGOs and governments, which were following the debates online. This meeting was held following the UNESCO MONDIACULT on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development that was held in September 2022. MONDIACULT gave rise to a declaration that was unanimously adopted by 150 States. This declaration also calls for a redoubling of efforts to protect living heritage as a driver for peace and sustainable development. It urges States Parties to protect living heritage in the face of climate change and highlights the powerful role of intangible heritage for people and communities. This Committee has the opportunity to continue this work and provide support to communities in safeguarding their living heritage. Mr Ottone concluded by wishing the delegates a successful session.
7. The **Chairperson** **of the seventeenth session of the Committee**, H.E. Mr Samir Addahre of Morocco, greeted all the participants and spoke of his honour to chair this Committee hosted by Morocco, which he was immensely proud to represent in UNESCO for the past three years. The Chairperson welcomed all the representatives of States Parties, NGOs, cultural institutions and other stakeholders from all over the world to Morocco, the land of light and a country that aspires to peace between people, irrespective of culture, faith, beliefs and race. This session also marked the return to normality after nearly three years of the pandemic. He acknowledged the presence of and welcomed the following ministers: the Minister and Deputy Minister of Albania; the Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture of Botswana; the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia; the Minister and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala; the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Moldova; the Vice-Minister of Culture and Natural Heritage of Guatemala; the Vice-Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Administrator of the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea; and the Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam.
8. The **Secretary of the Convention**, Mr Tim Curtis, welcomed all the participants and expressed his delight to be meeting in personafter nearly three years of online meetings. The list of participants was available online on the Convention’s website with more than 1,100 people representing 130 countries registered to participate in this session. There were many participants from Morocco, which showed the country’s enthusiasm for living heritage. On behalf of the Secretariat, he sincerely thanked the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting this session. For the past five months, the Secretariat and the local teams had worked together in an excellent understanding, making it possible for everyone to participate in the meeting. The Secretary particularly congratulated the Moroccan colleagues for their efforts in ensuring the success of this session. He thanked Spain for generously funding Spanish interpretation. The session was recorded live as a webcast, available on the session’s [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/17com).
9. Mr Julien Nakata of the **Secretariat** provided some practical information. This session, as in previous years, was a paperless meeting. All the documents had been published on the meeting [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/17com) and delegations were invited to download them. USB flash drives had been generously provided by the host country. Printed versions were also available upon request. The new version of the Basic Texts of the Convention[[2]](#footnote-3) was published in 2022 following revisions to the Operational Directives and the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly adopted during the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022. The four linguistic versions of the Basic Texts, namely, in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish, were also available on the webpage.
10. The **Chairperson** H.E. Mr Samir Addahre,provided further practical information concerning transport and restaurant services.

**ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Documents:** *LHE/22/17.COM/2 Rev.*

*[LHE/22/17.COM/INF.2.1 Rev.5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.2.1_Rev.5-EN.docx)*

*[LHE/22/17.COM/INF.2.2 Rev.7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.2.2_Rev.7-EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*17.COM 2*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/2)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the item 2 and the adoption of the agenda.
2. The **Secretary** referred the Committeeto the provisional agenda contained in working document 2 Rev, which included twenty items with different subitems. The provisional agenda had been prepared in accordance with Rule 9 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure. The documents were drafted in English and French, and published on the website by the statutory deadline of 31 October 2022, four weeks before the opening of this session, in accordance with Rule 42 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure. The exception was document 11 on the ‘Strategy for the monitoring, evaluation and identification of lessons learned for International Assistance projects’, which was published on 17 November. The list of documents was found in INF.2.2. Rev.4. All working documents bore the reference LHE/22/17.COM, followed by a number corresponding to the item number on the provisional agenda. For information documents, the number was preceded by ‘INF’. Revised documents were marked as ‘REV’, and ‘Add’ for addenda and ‘CORR’ for corrigenda. This seventeenth session was a six-day meeting. The timetable was adopted by the Bureau at its meeting on 4 October at UNESCO Headquarters. Items would be discussed according to the order indicated in the timetable and approved by the Bureau. The sessions would be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., with a two-hour lunch break and no night sessions. The Committee was invited to adopt the agenda, not the timetable, which would be adjusted as necessary by the Bureau at its daily morning session, which was open to Observers. A series of side-events had been organized, including exhibitions, performances, seminars and roundtables. A press conference would be held during the lunch break.
3. The **Chairperson** explained how the debates would be structured. Given the tight schedule and the number of items, he asked Committee Members to limit their speaking time to two minutes, with no more than two interventions per item, if possible. Amendments to the draft decisions could be submitted by email using the dedicated form. Once the decision was adopted, time permitting, Observers could take the floor at the end of the discussion on each item. However, only Members of the Committee were able to take the floor during debates on draft decisions. With regard to agenda item 7, an extremely important item to everyone, the Secretariat had dedicated sufficient time for the report of the Evaluation Body and, in particular, items 7.a, 7.b, 7.c and 7.d. In all, the Committee would examine fifty-four files in approximately thirteen hours, from the afternoon of Tuesday, 29 November until the end of 1 December. In order to respect the schedule, no more than ten minutes would be spent per file, on average. Due to the short time devoted to each case, the Committee was asked to adopt the working method used in previous years.
4. The **Chairperson** explained that all decisions relating to nominations for inscription on the Lists, requests for international assistance and proposals for inclusion in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices would be adopted without debate unless a member of the Committee wished to raise a particular point. Members of the Committee were therefore invited to propose amendments to the draft decisions by Tuesday, 29 November, that is, before the meeting of the Bureau, as the Bureau would draw up the list of files to be discussed and adapt the calendar according to the requests for amendment. During the discussions, Members of the Committee could ask to speak and participate in the debate, if necessary. In cases of proposed amendments, the Chairperson would seek to build consensus by assessing support and objections to proposed amendments, in accordance with Decision [11.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/8). To that end, when an amendment is proposed, he would determine whether it received relative active support from the Committee. In the event of an objection to an amendment by a Member of the Committee, the Chairperson would determine whether the amendment received broad active support. He hoped the proceedings would run smoothly, as the decision-making process had an impact on the credibility of the work of the Committee and of the Convention as a whole. Following the adoption of each decision, the submitting State or States would be given the opportunity to speak, show a video or present the element. With no comments or voiced objections to the working methodology, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/2) **adopted**.

**ITEM 3 OF THE AGENDA:**

**OBSERVERS**

**Document:**[*LHE/22/17.COM/3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-3-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 3*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/3)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 3 on Observers.
2. The **Secretary** explained that the Committee was asked to take note of the Observers authorized to attend this session. Rule 8 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure provides the criteria for the attendance of Observers to Committee sessions. According to this Rule and, in conformity with Decisions [14.COM 3](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/3), [15.COM 4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/4) and [16.COM 3](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/3), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) was able to participate in this session as an Observer. It was noted that the working document under this item did not mention the participation of accredited NGOs as they are automatically admitted as Observers, in conformity with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure. The Secretariat had not received any written requests from entities to attend future sessions as Observers.
3. The **Chairperson** reminded Observers that they could take the floor during a general debate or after a decision, but not intervene during discussions on draft decisions. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**17.COM 3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/3) **adopted.**

**ITEM 4.a OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/4.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-4.a-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 4.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/4.a)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda sub-item 4.a and the adoption of the summary records of the sixteenth session and agenda sub-item 4.b and the adoption of the summary records of the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee.
2. The **Secretary** explained that,in application of Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, documents 4.a and 4.b presented the summary records of the sixteenth ordinary session and the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee, respectively. It was hoped that they provide a faithful summary of the interventions of all the Members of the Committee and Observers during these sessions. Recordings of the debates were also available on the webpages of the [sixteenth session](https://ich.unesco.org/en/16com) and the [fifth extraordinary session](https://ich.unesco.org/en/5extcom) of the Committee.
3. **The** **Chairperson** **declared Decision**[**17.COM 4.a**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/4.a) **adopted.**

**ITEM 4.b OF THE AGENDA:**

**ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE FIFTH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/4.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-4.b-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 4.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/4.b)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the sub-item and document 4.b. **The Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**17.COM 4.b**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/4.b) **adopted.**
2. 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 seventeenth session of the Committee was composed of the Vice-Chairs (Switzerland, Czechia, Panama, Republic of Korea and Botswana), the Rapporteur (Mr Ramiro Maurice Silva Rivera of Peru), and himself as Chairperson. He thanked the Members of the Committee for his election and the Bureau colleagues for their active participation, hard work and spirit of cooperation throughout the year. Thanks to their help, a number of important issues had been examined. 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. Over the past year, the Committee had three online meetings, on 7 March, 6 May and 23 June, as well as one in-person meeting on 4 October 2022. In addition, one electronic consultation was held in March 2022. In 2022, the Bureau examined eight International Assistance requests up to US$100,000, all of which were granted, respectively, to Chad, Colombia, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Dominican Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Thailand, as well as to nine States Parties in the Caribbean, which submitted a joint International Assistance request. This was particularly encouraging, as it was the first time an international assistance request had been submitted by multiple States Parties. These requests represented a total amount of US$730,255 granted from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. These approved projects were aimed at safeguarding specific living heritage practices, developing community-based inventories, strengthening heritage policies, and building national or local capacities for implementing the Convention. The States Parties were congratulated by a round of applause.
3. The **Chairperson** reported that the Bureau dealt with issues resulting in the first ever application of two provisions from the Convention and its Operational Directives. In June 2022, the Bureau established the procedure on how to treat the request by Ukraine to inscribe ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ as a case of extreme urgency in accordance with Article 17.3 of the Convention and paragraph 32 of the Operational Directives. This nomination file was then evaluated by the Evaluation Body and subsequently forwarded to the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee on 1 July 2022 for examination. The element was inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (the Urgent Safeguarding List) within ten weeks of receipt of the request. In October 2022, the Bureau was made aware via the Secretariat of a series of communications from third parties requesting the removal of ‘Ducasse of Ath’ from the Representative List concerning the element ‘Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’, an element incorporated on the Representative List in 2008. This case is the first application of the new provisions, and specifically paragraph 40.2(e) of the Operational Directives related to the removal of an element, as established through the revisions of the Operational Directives by the General Assembly at its ninth session in July 2022. The Bureau thus recommended bringing the removal request to the attention of the Committee for discussion under item 8.
4. The **Chairperson** further reported that, based on consultation with the Committee Members, the venue had been changed from UNESCO Headquarters to Rabat. He informed the Committee that a new Bureau would be elected at the end of this session and therefore encouraged all the Members to start consulting among their respective Electoral Groups to identify Bureau members and a Rapporteur for 2023. Transparency continued to be an important guiding principle for the organization of the meetings of the Bureau. As was the case in the past two years, and in accordance with Recommendation 69 of the Open-ended Working Group on Governance, 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/17com-bureau) and were available for consultation. In addition, the Secretariat shared the decisions of the Bureau with all Bureau Members with a request that they transmit them to the Committee Members of their respective Electoral Groups. The Chairperson noted that there were no comments on the activities of the Bureau, and he therefore moved to the next agenda item.

**ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/5*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-5-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 5*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/5)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the important agenda item 5 and the Report of the Secretariat on its activities from January 2022 to June 2022.
2. The **Secretary** was pleased to share the most recent activities of the Secretariat covering the first six months of the year: January to June 2022. It also referred to the decisions taken by the ninth session of the General Assembly, given that many activities undertaken during the reporting period led to those decisions. Even though the report only covered six months, it was hoped that the Committee would notice how the document reflected the intensity of its operations. A wide range of activities was undertaken, including: (a) support to numerous meetings of the governing bodies of the Convention; (b) simultaneous administration of various cooperation mechanisms; (c) carrying out of operational projects; (d) the expansion of the capacity-building programme and its ongoing transformation to a multimodal delivery; (e) responses to emergency situations; (f) the development of new thematic initiatives; and (g) the revision of Operational Directives and forms, among other things. The Secretary focused only on key points, as details were presented in the working document.
3. The **Secretary** remarked thattheCOVID-19 pandemic continued to affect operations in 2022. However, the Secretariat had been able to build on its experiences gained over the past few years with the introduction of new technological tools, interfaces and meeting modalities to ensure the statutory life of the Convention remained uninterrupted. While many meetings were held online during the first six months, the global evolution of the pandemic made it possible for the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements for the progressive return to in-person meetings. For example, after two consecutive cycles of online meetings, the Evaluation Body met in person for the first time in its June meeting, with the ninth session of the General Assembly taking place at UNESCO Headquarters from 5 to 7 July 2022. The Secretary was also pleased to report on a major achievement of the reporting period, which is the conclusion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. The ninth session of the General Assembly approved revisions to the Operational Directives, culminating in an extensive reflection process that was initiated in 2017 and included several expert consultations and intergovernmental discussions. The revisions to the Operational Directives established new procedures that touched upon many aspects of the listing mechanisms of the Convention. These include: (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) fast-tracking and streamlining aspects of the International Assistance mechanism, among other things. To operationalize the latest amendments to the Operational Directives, the Secretariat immediately embarked upon the complex but critical task of revising and developing new forms,[[3]](#footnote-4) which were made available at the end of 2022 on the Convention website. The outcome of the global reflection constituted a major landmark for the Convention, a testament to its dynamic nature. The full effect of these changes will, however, take one or two cycles, or years, to be fully felt and assessed. The global reflection on the listing mechanisms also gave rise to a new proposal for intergovernmental reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention.[[4]](#footnote-5) The Secretariat had already started the preparations for this process, the details of which were presented under item 10 of the agenda.
4. The **Secretary** shared another important achievement during the reporting period: the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Convention’s General Assembly with a view to the harmonization of the Rules of Procedure of all the General Assemblies of the culture Conventions. The Secretariat participated in the preparation of the Model Rules of Procedure for the assemblies of Parties to UNESCO’s culture Conventions, which were examined by the 41st session of the General Conference in 2021 and served as the basis for the revisions to the Rules of Procedure of the 2003 Convention’s General Assembly adopted at its ninth Session in July 2022. As such, the 2003 Convention became the first of the seven culture Conventions to spearhead this harmonization process. The Secretary also highlighted developments over the past six months related to International Assistance. Between January and June 2022, the Secretariat administered five new International Assistance requests approved by the Bureau, and it continued to support the implementation of forty-two active projects. Reports of States Parties on the use of International Assistance were presented under agenda item 6.d. In line with the Recommendations of the 2021 Internal Oversight Services (IOS) Evaluation, the Secretariat undertook activities to increase the visibility of International Assistance, including a series of three global webinars organized in March 2022, and the development of a step-by-step toolkit for requesting International Assistance, which is available online in [English](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/53724-EN.pdf) and [French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/53724-FR.pdf). Furthermore, at the present session, the Committee was requested to examine the Secretariat’s proposal for the monitoring, evaluation and identification of lessons learned from International Assistance projects, presented under agenda item 11. Another international mechanism of the Convention with very promising developments, and which occupied a significant amount of time, is periodic reporting. The Secretariat undertook an assessment of a total of twenty-four reports submitted by eighteen States Parties on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, examined under item 6.a. Regarding the periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of elements on the Representative List, while the Secretariat was launching the analysis of the forty-two reports from Europe, it was also finalizing the in-depth analysis of twenty-eight periodic reports submitted by States from Latin America and the Caribbean, and providing training to focal points from the Arab region for their upcoming reporting session. A full analysis of the Latin America and the Caribbean reporting could be found in working document [LHE/22/17.COM/INF.6.c Rev](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.6.c_Rev-EN.pdf)., which was available on the website of the Convention.[[5]](#footnote-6)
5. The **Secretary** also reported on the updating of periodic reporting in three regions: Latin America and the Caribbean (the first report), the Arab States (due for submission in December 2022) and Africa (for which capacity-building was being prepared). The Secretariat was actively seeking funding to accompany the periodic reporting training for African focal points in 2023. Europe was the second region to submit periodic reports for this cycle and it saw a high submission rate, following similarly encouraging results during the previous cycle with Latin America and the Caribbean. It was noted that the reforms for the periodic reports undertaken a few years ago were showing promise, with submission rates at around 85 to 94 per cent, a significant increase from previous years. The Secretariat had conducted an analytical overview of the forty-two reports submitted in December 2021 by States from Electoral Groups I and II, presented under agenda item 6.b. This was also related to the recent UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT). The Final Declaration called upon UNESCO to produce a comprehensive Global Report on Cultural Policies on a quadrennial basis, which shall be drawn from the data and indicators provided by Member States through the periodic reports of all of UNESCO’s normative instruments in the field of culture. As the Convention finalizes the implementation of the first cycle of the reformed reporting across all regions, it was deemed important to start reflecting on how best to adapt the process so that it can feed into the global reports on cultural policies in a streamlined way and thus effectively contribute to the quadrennial Global Report.
6. The **Secretary** presented some of the recent activities in the development of three thematic initiatives (under agenda item 13), which will involve launching surveys and working with experts to develop areas, including: (a) safeguarding living heritage and climate change; (b) the economic dimensions of safeguarding living heritage; and (c) safeguarding living heritage in urban contexts. The Secretariat would continue to work on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. An important project, funded by Japan, was launched in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Moreover, in response to the ongoing war in Ukraine, the Secretariat had made a concerted effort with other entities in the Culture Sector to support the safeguarding of Ukrainian living heritage. It launched a project financed by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund to be piloted in a select number of primary and secondary schools, using the intangible cultural heritage in education approach. Another set of International Assistance requests was currently being elaborated to address the safeguarding needs identified in five neighbouring countries, which had received a large influx of displaced people and refugees. In the same context, the first inscription of an element on the Urgent Safeguarding List as a situation of extreme urgency (under Article 17.3 of the Convention) occurred when Ukraine requested the nomination of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’. The Secretariat supported the procedure and managed to have the full process presented to the Bureau, evaluated by the Evaluation Body and presented to the extraordinary session of the Committee within ten weeks.
7. The **Secretary** further explained that the Secretariat provided support to countries in the field of capacity-building, particularly under the first funding priority, Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage using multi-modal approaches and contribute to sustainable development. This work involved reorienting the capacity-building programme and using lessons learned from the pandemic to provide a multimodal in-person and online approach in order to have a broader reach in the future. The Secretariat also launched a call for expressions of interest to expand the global network of facilitators[[6]](#footnote-7) so that more of this network could be drawn upon to meet the growing requests and respond to the Recommendation of the IOS Evaluation. In this regard, the Committee may wish to appeal in the decision to Member States to continue to look for either hosting or financially supporting training courses to equip the growing number of facilitators with the knowledge and skills required to support countries in their safeguarding efforts. The Secretariat also continued its work on the second funding priority, Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. In doing so, it collaborated closely with the Education Sector of UNESCO to further sharpen the joint framework for the intersectoral programme ‘Living Heritage and Education’. This programme built its momentum through intensified inter-sectoral collaboration, as well as in the context of the development of a UNESCO framework on culture and arts education. The work on this framework was endorsed during the Executive Board session (Decision [215 EX/5.I.D](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000383611_fre.locale%3Den)) [in October 2022] and was also highlighted in the Final Declaration of the MONDIACULT 2022 Conference. Regarding the first funding priority, the Committee was asked to encourage States Parties to provide support for this important topic and for intersectoral collaboration with the Education Sector, with the aim of anchoring the integration of living heritage safeguarding in a much broader manner.
8. The **Secretary** was also pleased to report that the Secretariat continued its preparatory activities to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023. Aligned with the themes noted by the ninth session of the General Assembly, the Secretariat organized an online consultation with UNESCO Field Offices to pursue the identification of partnerships and financial support for the organization of this celebratory year. Summarizing the reporting period in numbers, the Secretariat had provided capacity-building support to 96 Member States, including 16 in Africa and 9 in SIDS. Of these, 22 States initiated new programmes focusing on the core actions under the Convention and under different thematic areas. The Secretariat organized 12 statutory meetings, including sessions of the General Assembly, the Committee and the Bureau, as well as meetings of the Open-ended working group and the Evaluation Body. It provided an in-depth analysis of 28 reports submitted by Latin America and Caribbean States, and produced an analytical overview of 42 reports from the European region. The Secretariat trained 21 national focal points for periodic reporting in the Arab States. It monitored 42 International Assistance requests in 34 States, including 17 in Africa and 9 in SIDS, as well as processed and evaluated five new International Assistance requests, including one from Africa and two from SIDS. The Secretariat also treated 57 nomination files for the 2022 cycle, including one file treated on an accelerated basis under Article 17.3. It administered the registration of 82 nomination files submitted for the 2023 cycle and verified the technical completeness of 60 of those files. The Secretariat strengthened collaboration with the ICH NGO Forum, notably in the context of mapping the domain of activities of 65 accredited NGOs, and organized an interregional training workshop in cooperation with two Field Offices, training 30 participants from five SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean. Furthermore, it processed seven proposals for the establishment or renewal of UNESCO Chairs, including the establishment of the first UNITWIN network on ICH.
9. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for the detailed presentation, which clearly demonstrated the efforts and enormous workload undertaken by the Secretariat on a wide range of activities. He opened the floor for comments.
10. The delegation of **Sweden** congratulated the Chairperson on his presidency and extended warmest thanks to Morocco for its tremendous hospitality. It thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report and for the important results achieved, as well as for all the work carried out during the short period covered by the report. Despite COVID-19 continuing to affect the working conditions of the Secretariat, the work had progressed and developed in so many areas, not least in the conclusion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. The delegation noted several important efforts. For instance, the work with safeguarding living heritage in emergencies, and with the ICH NGO Forum, with the Secretariat strengthening collaboration by conducting a mapping of the domains of competencies of accredited NGOs. Sweden also underlined the importance of future work within three areas of intervention that the Secretariat highlighted in its report: (a) the implementation of the results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and the reflection for a broader implementation of Article 18; (b) the intention to further work with the potential uses of the data collected through the periodic reporting, not least because reporting is an extensive and resource-intensive task for both the Secretariat and the Member States; and (c) highlighting and strengthening the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development in line with the culture Declaration at MONDIACULT 2022. With regard to the examination of nominations to the Lists and Register, Sweden emphasized the importance of the working agreement and that the decisions be based on expert knowledge so as to build trust in the Convention and the Committee’s relationship with the Evaluation Body. It would therefore not support any decision that would disregard this agreement.
11. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and for the majestic welcome shown during the opening ceremony, as well as for the excellent organization of this session. After two years of online meetings, it was happy to finally meet in person, adding that it was confident that the Chairperson will successfully guide the Committee in its work. Morocco is a country with an incredible wealth of intangible cultural heritage. [In her personal capacity] she had experienced its breadth, colours and flavours many years ago through a woman who was a bearer of living traditions in Morocco, a tireless ambassador of the culinary arts, folklore, religious traditions, customs and skills associated with the traditional culture of Morocco. Each country should have its own proud representative of the culture that has shaped its identity. The delegation appreciated the opportunity to work in such an inspiring environment and wished everyone a good working session. It thanked the Secretariat for its clear and effective reporting on its activities, noting its dedication to supporting the organs of the Convention and promoting the implementation of the Convention, and thanking the entire team for their tireless efforts. Among the wide range of activities undertaken, the delegation highlighted the impact of the global reflection on the listing mechanism, which now deals with various situations for which the Committee did not previously have clear rules. It was also happy to note that the General Assembly had set an example for the other governing bodies of the culture Conventions by harmonizing the Rules of Procedure, despite the difficult negotiations. Czechia highlighted the exemplary support that Ukraine and its intangible cultural heritage had received in the current war on its territory and thanked the neighbouring countries that had hosted many refugees and responded to the needs of their communities. Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, Czechia had received war refugees, especially women and children, providing them with temporary, tolerable living conditions, especially for the schoolchildren, while helping the Ukrainian community currently living in the Czechia. Indeed, the inclusion of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List in a case of extreme urgency under Article 17.3 of the Convention was a strong symbolic gesture by the international community, and it thanked the Secretariat in preparing the entire procedure. The delegation concluded by expressing hope that the Secretariat will be a valuable partner in the celebration of the Convention’s twentieth anniversary.
12. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the Moroccan Government and people for their warm welcome and hospitality, and for the organization of this seventeenth session in this magnificent city with its outstanding universal value, which associates both tangible and intangible heritage in a single privileged place. It expressed gratitude to Morocco for the beautiful opening ceremony and exceptional cultural evening. Rabat is a modern capital and historic city that embodies the values of coexistence and tolerance, and why it was designated as the cultural capital of the Islamic world for 2022 by UNESCO. The delegation also thanked the Secretariat for the quality of its report, which presented an overview of its activities carried out to strengthen the mechanisms for international cooperation and assistance in the framework of the Convention. As a Member of the Committee, Mauritania would undertake to ensure the fulfilment of the Committee’s main function, which is to promote the objectives of the Convention and to encourage and assist in its implementation. Mauritania is convinced that a simplification of the rules governing the issues recently raised and a proposal of expertise to countries that are underrepresented on the Lists in the preparation of nominations would contribute to a more effective implementation of the Convention. These countries should benefit from appropriate measures to inscribe their intangible heritage so as to promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. It was convinced that encouraging multinational nominations and emphasizing the capacity-building of NGOs active in the field would ensure more targeted and greater safeguarding of intangible heritage. The delegation reiterated its thanks to Morocco, wishing the Committee great success during this session.
13. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** thanked the Chairperson and the Government of Morocco for the traditional hospitality and excellent organization of this Committee, and for its magnificent opening ceremony. It was an honour for Uzbekistan to serve as a Member of the Committee for the first time. Uzbekistan commended the Secretariat for the extensive work carried out in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage around the world despite the many challenges faced over the last few years. The report was important to take stock of the work done, how it engaged the Committee, and the areas of focus in joint efforts aimed at further promoting the Convention. The delegation supported the activities in all areas reflected in the report. It especially took note of some key areas, such as capacity building through education, the UNESCO Chairs programme, financial assistance, and others. Uzbekistan is keen to expand the activities aimed at providing more assistance to capacity building focusing on countries that are underrepresented on the Lists, as well as for the elements in need of urgent safeguarding. This will help ensure geographical and thematic diversity of the elements and better address the issues under the Convention. It fully supported the draft decision.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked Uzbekistan for its intervention, adding that there would be ample opportunity to return to these topics, whether they concern the reflection on the listing mechanism, capacity building, UNESCO Chairs, underrepresented countries, or issues related to urgent safeguarding.
15. The delegation of **Morocco** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, convinced that under his leadership and wisdom the Committee will experience great success. It commended the work and efforts of the Secretariat, expressing satisfaction with the clear and detailed report covering January to June 2022. This seventeenth session had an important agenda, including, in particular, the examination of the periodic reports of States Parties, the examination of a significant number of nominations for inscription on the Lists of the Convention, requests for International Assistance, and the situation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The delegation welcomed the results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, a process launched in 2017 and one of the essential points raised in the Secretariat’s report. Indeed, a number of important revisions and improvements had been made concerning the annual number of nominations, the order of priority, the working methods of the Evaluation Body, and the procedure for examining exceptional cases. These consensual results were obtained following long and inclusive discussions in the open-ended intergovernmental working group. This reform reinforces the credibility of the listing mechanisms and constitutes progress in the operation of the Convention. In this regard, the delegation sincerely thanked H.E. Mr Oike Atsuyuki, Ambassador of Japan, for his commitment and the quality of the work accomplished as the Chairperson of this working group. It also emphasized the importance of the capacity-building programme and the technical support for better safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. To this end, the delegation considered it important that the capacity-building programme implemented by the Convention be sufficiently supported financially in order to further develop its operational approach and better respond to the requests of Member States, which are constantly increasing. The International Assistance mechanism was also of great importance to Morocco in the field of safeguarding living heritage. To this end, monitoring, evaluation and lessons learned from International Assistance projects could help improve this mechanism, and the strategy proposed in this context was welcomed. The delegation was thus in favour of the adoption of the draft decision.
16. The delegation of **Germany** thanked the Chairperson for hosting the Committee and for the incredible hospitality and organization of this meeting. Germany was very pleased to be a Member of this Committee for the first time, and it looked forward to fruitful cooperation with other Members. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for the report on its work, especially for the detailed section on safeguarding living heritage in emergencies and its rapid action concerning the urgent inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’. It was also pleased to note the mention of the conference on the cultures for more sustainable futures, which took place in Germany in May 2022 and was co-organized by the UNESCO Chair in Weimar and the UNESCO Chair in Jena, and financed by the Foreign Office. In September, MONDIACULT confirmed the relevance of cultures in the fight for sustainable development, with Germany contributing to the discussion. The delegation concluded by drawing attention to its side event (held the following day) on Afghanistan’s intangible heritage memory organized with the UNESCO Secretariat and Professor Tiago de Oliveira Pinto from the University of Franz Liszt in Weimar.
17. The delegation of **Switzerland** congratulated Morocco for its wonderful welcome and for the spectacular opening ceremony. Switzerland thanked the Secretariat for its rich and detailed report, which reflected its intense activity in the first half of 2022, and the constant quality of its work and ability to adapt to, at times, complex situations. The Secretariat had ensured the proper functioning of the statutory bodies and supported important milestones for the Convention. It had worked to finalize the long-awaited reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, which made it possible to adopt new Operational Directives at the last General Assembly. Indeed, its implementation and monitoring were key steps in improving procedures. Switzerland supported the permanent evolution of the Convention and the development of its governance and working methods. As such, it called for expertise to be placed at the centre of the Committee’s work to avoid bringing external political issues into deliberations. With the approach of the twentieth anniversary, the delegation remarked that the Convention had already achieved great recognition. The twentieth anniversary thus represented an opportunity to strengthen this visibility at international, national and regional levels. During these twenty years, the Convention has enjoyed impressive success in terms of the number of States Parties, the growing interest in inscriptions on its Lists and, most of all, because of the recognized importance of safeguarding living heritage.
18. The delegation of **Switzerland** had two remarks about priorities for the next few years. First, cultural heritage, in its various forms and expressions, must be taken into account as an essential resource for sustainable development. Second, in the face of a standardized digital reality that invades our spaces (including our mental state) more and more each day, the preservation of living traditions, which are rich and varied, is vital for our common humanity. The delegation asked the Secretariat for details of its planned activities for the anniversary, in particular, regarding the global campaign, the celebratory events, and its communication initiatives. This concrete information would be useful to ensure coordination and complementarity with activities that States Parties could develop in 2023. Regarding the Convention emblem, the delegation believed that it could be better used to ensure effective communication. Indeed, the conditions for the use of the emblem were initially restrictive to prevent abuse, but today they had become too complicated. The Secretariat could therefore simplify the conditions for obtaining the emblem so that it could be used more effectively in the recognition of intangible heritage, especially on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary and beyond.
19. The delegation of **Brazil** thanked the Government of Morocco for its warm welcome. It complimented the Secretary and the Secretariat for the valuable work and comprehensive report. The completion of the work on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention was particularly important. In 2023, the Convention will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. Indeed, Brazil had played an active part in the first negotiations of the Convention, and it was enthusiastic in deepening the global comprehension of the potential that intangible cultural heritage has to overcome social inequalities and to foster sustainable development. In these twenty years, the Convention had had a deep impact on Brazil. The delegation shared an emblematic example in this regard. The artisanal way of making Minas cheese is a cultural element that consists of traditional knowledge in the management of specific environmental characteristics rooted in the daily life of communities in the State of Minas Gerais. In the 1990s, this traditional knowledge was in need of urgent safeguarding, and through reflection and lessons learned from the Convention, Brazil was able to implement safeguarding plans with the bearers to value their knowledge and production techniques. Brazil was proud to share the result of this good practice. The delegation had invited the bearers of the communities responsible for the safeguarding of this element to this session in Rabat and delegates were invited to visit the small exhibition during the coffee break to taste a little bit of the traditional knowledge and flavours of Brazil. To celebrate the Convention’s twentieth anniversary, the Brazilian Heritage Institute had initiated a cycle of activities and events on disseminating the Convention’s principles, as well as raising awareness on such issues.
20. The delegation of **Rwanda** congratulated Morocco for the excellent organization of the Committee, which after two years of virtual sessions, allowed the Committee to meet in person. It thanked the Secretariat for presenting its detailed report on its activities, which reflected the intensity of its activity during the reporting period, as well as for the efficient preparation of this meeting. While the impacts of the pandemic remain significant in many regions of the world, the delegation thanked the Secretariat for having taken all the necessary measures to guarantee the uninterrupted statutory life of the Convention, in particular, in the organization of numerous online meetings of the Evaluation Body. Rwanda welcomed the continuation and strengthening of thematic capacities, in particular, capacity building for safeguarding heritage in emergencies, and intangible cultural heritage in education. In this regard, Rwanda noted with satisfaction the recent implementation of the project on living heritage and education in Zimbabwe and Namibia developed with the UNESCO Harare Office. It was also satisfied with the results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which constituted an important step for the Convention, reiterating its thanks to Japan for the work done. However, despite the good efforts of the Secretariat, Rwanda deplored the lack of geographical balance in the approval of files. This further illustrates the continued need for capacity building in certain regions, such as Latin America and Africa. Rwanda fully supported the idea put forward by the Secretariat in its report to take stock of the Secretariat’s workload and priorities for the coming years. These priorities should be established according to the workload of the Committee, particularly in the context of the new procedures. Finally, it considered that capacity building, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, especially in cases of emergency, and sustainable education must remain the priorities of the Secretariat in the years to come.
21. The delegation of **Paraguay** expressed gratitude to Morocco for its generous hosting, commending the wonderful opening ceremony. It congratulated the Secretariat on the comprehensive report and for its tireless work to promote and safeguard intangible cultural heritage. The Convention recognizes that intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary and living, all at the same time. It is a source of integration of our communities. Thus, when conducting our work, we need to think back and refresh our memories of our ancestors and reconnect to our origins, as expressed in the spirit of the 2003 Convention. The delegation wished all the delegates a successful meeting, adding that it hoped that the Representative List would better reflect the beauty and diversity of the world in a balanced way.
22. The delegation of **Peru** congratulated the Chairperson for the excellent organization and for the hospitality, warm welcome, and the opening ceremony, commending the Director-General of UNESCO for the organization of this meeting. The delegation was also very happy to meet in person after three years, and thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report on the work carried out during the first semester of 2022. The Secretariat is a key actor in the implementation of the Convention. One of the main outcomes is the product of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, as underlined in the report. It contributes to increasing the credibility of the mechanisms and the Lists and highlights the need for community participation throughout the process. The delegation noted the efforts made by the Secretariat in supporting the Evaluation Body in its evaluation of the files, and in supporting national safeguarding measures and efforts. The delegation also highlighted the continuous support to countries to increase capacities to safeguard their cultural heritage and for sustainable development. The Secretariat’s work over the last twenty years was highlighted, but there is still work ahead. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its support in the work carried out by Latin America, stating that it was very important to continue to support this work.
23. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** expressed its heartfelt gratitude to Morocco for its grace and hospitality. It was truly impressed by the depth, richness and diversity of Moroccan culture. The Republic of Korea expressed great appreciation for all the efforts made by the Secretariat during the pandemic to facilitate communication and outreach, which showed resilience and creativity. The delegation had engaged in various activities to assist the Secretariat in the successful adoption and establishment of UNESCO’s Overall Result Framework (ORF). The Republic of Korea supported ICHCAP,[[7]](#footnote-8) developed the handbook for the use of Overall Result Framework, and helped publish the translated version of the guidelines in multiple languages. The Republic of Korea considers that the global reflection on the listing mechanisms was a meaningful forum for discussing the future of the Convention. It was hoped that a reflection on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, supported by Sweden, would be helpful in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the ultimate goal of the Convention itself. The Republic of Korea will continue contributing to the successful implementation of the Convention and taking part in efforts to make the relevant mechanisms and programmes better reflect the needs and challenges of the diverse stakeholders.
24. The delegation of **Malaysia** thanked Morocco for its warm and kind hospitality in hosting the seventeenth session of the Committee. The programmes and events lined up throughout the week demonstrated the huge undertaking by Morocco to ensure a successful meeting. Malaysia congratulated the Chairperson, confident that he would lead the meeting successfully. Malaysia welcomed the announcement earlier on the establishment of the National Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Morocco, which will further enhance the initiatives to protect, promote and safeguard intangible cultural heritage, in particular among youth. This was the first time Malaysia had been elected to the Committee, and it was honoured to be in Rabat, expressing gratitude to all States Parties that supported its election and congratulating all the newly elected Committee Members. It was indeed fortunate that, after a more than two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the Committee was gathered in Rabat. Without a doubt, the Convention had gained traction over the years. The Convention demonstrates that culture should be shared, valued and cherished by all, as it embodies and reflects the ways of life of communities, inherited over generations. It was therefore appropriate that all States Parties take the necessary measures to safeguard and protect their intangible cultural heritage, as stipulated by the Convention. Malaysia commended the Secretariat for its success in concluding the reflection of the listing mechanisms supported by Japan, and for the final recommendations and revisions to the Operational Directives. It complemented the Secretariat on its achievement in harmonizing the Rules of Procedures of the Convention with other Conventions, the first of the seven Conventions to spearhead this harmonization.
25. The delegation of **Malaysia** also welcomed the continuous support of national safeguarding efforts through the International Assistance mechanism and the capacity-building programmes organized by the Secretariat in supporting countries. These will further promote and enhance the efforts of countries to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. In line with its commitment, Malaysia had conducted the first international conference on intangible cultural heritage on 26–28 October 2022 in a hybrid manner, with the support of the Secretariat. This conference involved the participation of States Parties including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Philippines. Participants shared and discussed the theme of good safeguarding measures and practices. Malaysia thanked the Secretary once again for his keynote speech during the session, which had provided insights to better understand the Convention, especially within the Asia-Pacific region. Malaysia appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat in providing support to countries in strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, including inventorying, safeguarding plans, policy development in different thematic areas, notably, emergencies, and education in urban contexts, which benefitted ninety-six Member States. Malaysia was satisfied with the Secretariat’s report despite the challenges and workload, and it hoped that the Secretariat will continue to receive support from countries, NGOs and all parties related to this work. Malaysia was confident of fruitful and constructive discussions and looked forward to sharing its experience and commitment to the Convention.
26. The **Chairperson** thanked Malaysia, congratulating it on its election to this Committee and thanking it for its commitment in favour of the spirit and values of this Convention.
27. The delegation of **India** congratulated the Chairperson on his election as Chairperson, extending gratitude to Morocco for its warm welcome and for India’s election to the Committee. It expressed gratitude to the Secretary for the comprehensive report on the activities of the Secretariat, stressing the importance of capacity building and the creation of more training sessions to safeguard intangible cultural heritage among all countries.
28. The delegation of **Slovakia** was happy to have the opportunity to visit Morocco known for its rich and varied culture and its extraordinary hospitality, as seen at the magical opening ceremony and in the streets of Rabat. It was also an historic moment for the Slovak Republic, elected for the first time to the Committee. The Slovak Republic noted the effectiveness, efficiency and dynamic work of the Committee and thanked the Secretariat for its serious and well-prepared report, as well as the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and his team for their extraordinary work. In this context, the delegation highlighted the example of the accelerated inscription of the ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’, in application of Article 17.3, which was a good example of UNESCO’s effectiveness in terms of rapid action and appropriate response in the extremely difficult situation of the armed conflict in Ukraine. The delegation also thanked the Secretariat for its inspiring ideas related to its work. The results of scientific research are fundamental in the continued work with communities and government bodies, as well as within the framework of the recovery plan for Ukraine and Ukrainian displaced persons in Slovakia. The Slovak Republic was also involved in the implementation of the results of the ‘Teaching and learning about living heritage’ project in Slovakia. Educational activities were being organized, with the support of an international team, which included the development of a mobile application containing the elements of intangible heritage inscribed on the Lists and in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of UNESCO. At the national level, with committed communities, it was preparing the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. This was a rare opportunity to spread the spirit of UNESCO at the national level. It had organized an inter-ministerial conference, a traveling exhibition and a cultural folk event that fuses knowledge, artistic elements and experimental routes for the protection of intangible cultural heritage.
29. The **Chairperson** thanked Slovakia for its kind words towards the Secretariat, as it was indeed doing a tremendous job, adding that he had seen the extent of its commitment. He thanked the Secretary and his team, as well as the Assistant Director-General, for their work.
30. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** thanked Morocco for the fraternal and warm hospitality, and for the facilities offered since its arrival in Rabat, assuring the Chairperson of its support for the smooth running of the Committee’s work. It congratulated the Secretariat for the quality of its report, both for its content (in view of the number of activities carried out) and for the regular holding of statutory meetings despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation had a specific point concerning the quest for better geographical representation, both of the elements inscribed and the elements brought to the Committee for examination. It noted that only one country from Group V(a) of African States was able to submit an element for evaluation at the present session. However, it welcomed the increase in the number of Group V(a) files for the next meetings of the Committee, as well as the capacity-building mechanism, the pursuit of which will contribute to equal opportunities in inscriptions on the various Lists of intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, it welcomed the adoption of the new Operational Directives on the issues related *inter alia* to the annual number of files, and the composition and working method of the Evaluation Body. The delegation commended the Secretariat for following up on the thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development. In this process of reflection, it wished to see more attention paid to the question of crises, particularly the crisis in the Sahel region, which affects several communities in the region. Burkina Faso had benefited from international assistance to build the capacities of actors involved in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The first phase was successfully completed, and the second phase was in the process of starting. The delegation commended the efforts of States Parties that are making additional contributions to help regularize programmes, projects and activities, and to achieve the objectives of the Convention. It reiterated its congratulations to the Secretariat and the Culture Sector for their support, for the work they accomplish, and for their diligence in the face of the various requests from States Parties.
31. The **Chairperson** thanked Burkina Faso, concurring that under-representation was indeed a recurring issue expressed by all African representatives, of which the Committee is aware.
32. The delegation of **Angola** thanked the Government of Morocco for its warm welcome and hospitality, and for hosting this seventeenth session of the Committee in beautiful Rabat. It also congratulated the Bureau and the Secretariat for their work in making this session a success. The delegation thanked the Secretariat and the Secretary for the report presented. On behalf of the entities of Angola and the delegation, it conveyed deep satisfaction for its first ever election as a Member of the Committee and the Convention, which would soon reach universality. The delegation considered that cultural diversity, based on the rich traditions of peoples, must be promoted by valuing the positive elements of the past and taking into account the fact that oral and other traditions, as well as popular arts, are privileged sources of the history and culture of humanity. Political will and community participation alone are not enough to successfully carry out public policies to safeguard heritage in developing countries. Several other obstacles exist in terms of the lack of financial and technical capacities. Angola therefore considered that international initiatives offer one type of solution and an important element in response to these difficulties. It was also one of the ways to prioritize under-represented countries in the Representative List. UNESCO must provide continuous technical and financial assistance with a view to strengthening the capacity of African and other institutions with the aim of achieving balanced representativeness in keeping with the realities and cultural riches of developing countries. The intangible heritage of unrepresented and under-represented countries is of extreme importance for the world’s cultural heritage. As such, Angola intends to be a dynamic State Party within the Convention, contributing to a more balanced regional presence and as a defender of the Convention.
33. The **Chairperson** congratulated Angola on its election and its expressed commitment. He agreed that there were indeed a number of issues that this Committee will have to examine to try and reduce this gap between the number of files submitted by African countries, in particular, and that of other regions of the world.
34. The delegation of **Viet Nam** commended the Chairperson for his able leadership, joining the previous speakers in thanking Morocco for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. It thanked the Member States for supporting Viet Nam as a Member of the Committee, adding that its leading expert in intangible cultural heritage would participate in this meeting. Intangible cultural heritage is not only a vital source for cultural diversity, creativity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, but also as a driver for sustainable development and resilience. COVID-19 highlighted more than ever the value of intangible cultural heritage and the importance communities attached to its continued practice and expression. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report, hard work and professionalism given the challenging times. It highly commended the Secretariat and the Committee for its effective work and was proud of its achievements thus far to promote the objectives of the Convention, to encourage and monitor its implementation, provide guidance, strengthen capacity-building programmes and, especially, ensure the landmark progress in the global reflection of the listing mechanisms and the successful implementation of the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism. The thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development are meaningful and pertinent to the interests of the States Parties and are in line with decisions 41C/4, 41C/5 and MONDIACULT in pursuit of resilience and sustainable development in a post-COVID-19 world and in the run-up to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. Viet Nam is committed to joining Committee Members to exert all efforts to improve the transparency and efficiency of the listing mechanisms, and to strengthen UNESCO priorities, especially Priority Africa, gender equality, SIDS, youth and capacity-building endeavours in the field of living heritage, to fulfil the noble objectives of the Convention.
35. The delegation of **Botswana** congratulated the Chairperson on his successful election and the people of Morocco, remarking on the fantastic opening ceremony that displayed the diverse intangible cultural heritage of Morocco. It thanked the Secretariat for its report and congratulated the team for their hard work and continued efforts in organizing this very important meeting. Following the approval of the new UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029 and the new programme and budget for 2022–2025, Botswana conducted workshops for the Culture Sector to share the new UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029 and the new programme and budget for 2022–2025. The workshops also aimed to align the two new frameworks to global, regional, subregional and national priorities. Botswana participated in the Convention’s call for experts to join the global network of facilitators, which was widely circulated among intangible cultural heritage stakeholders. The delegation was happy to announce that two professors at the University of Botswana, who are involved in the implementation of intangible cultural heritage, were selected for training to join the Convention’s global network of facilitators. This presented the opportunity to have more intangible cultural heritage experts and to become part of the network, as well as to benefit from trainings on the Convention. Capacity building for intangible cultural heritage in Botswana continues to be strengthened. One of the national experts participated and completed the UNESCO massive open online course (MOOC) on living heritage.[[8]](#footnote-9) Botswana continues to extend financial and technical support in the implementation of intangible cultural heritage programmes and to explore other fundraising opportunities. A request for International Assistance to implement a safeguarding plan for one of the elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, ‘Seperu folkdance and associated practices’, had been submitted to the Secretariat in March 2022 to be examined in the 2023 cycle. Botswana also participated in the online surveys on the thematic initiatives, economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, the results of which will be reported at the eighteenth session of the Committee. Botswana had started the process of compiling the periodic report on the implementation of the Convention for the regional reporting cycle for Africa in 2023. So far, as one of the initial stages of the first phase of the process, the name of a focal point had been submitted. It eagerly awaited this phase to begin work.
36. The **Chairperson** thanked the Minister of Botswana.
37. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked Morocco for hosting this meeting and for the warm hospitality, particularly the spectacular opening ceremony which showcased some of the rich intangible heritage of the country. It thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and the Secretariat for a very informative report and the comprehensive working documents. The delegation appreciated the voluminous tasks undertaken by the Secretariat and fully agreed with the concerns raised by other Committee Members regarding the development of capacity and international assistance for meaningful implementation of the Convention, particularly for under-represented countries. It was pleased that more attention had been focused on Africa and SIDS compared to 2021. The prioritization of education in the efforts of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through formal and non-formal education and the revised 1974 Recommendation[[9]](#footnote-10) were appreciated. As a first-time elected Member to the Committee, Bangladesh expressed gratitude to all States Parties for entrusting it with this responsibility, reiterating its firm commitment to upholding the Convention through its collective efforts to protect and promote the intangible elements of our rich cultures. The delegation pledged to work closely with States and the Secretariat to ensure the safeguarding of intangible heritage for the attainment of peace and sustainable development. Bangladesh joined the Committee to achieve a common vision of building an inclusive, just and peaceful global society that promotes culture, innovation and creativity. It believed that through this Convention, every country – big or small – would have equal opportunities to contribute and develop a better understanding of how to safeguard their respective intangible heritage, which is a shared heritage of all humankind. The Committee would analyse and adopt many decisions with technical discussions, negotiations and inscriptions. The delegation reminded the Committee that an element or file represented a heritage with a community behind it, eagerly awaiting to celebrate its recognition. All heritage matters because every community matters. Let this Convention be a means for them to survive and thrive.
38. The **Chairperson** congratulated Bangladesh once again, adding that all the Members of the Committee would agree with this message regarding the communities and the work they must do for them, to help them perpetuate their extraordinary intangible heritage, which is an essential element of common human history, culture and identity. This is why intangible cultural heritage is becoming increasingly important, which can be seen, particularly, through interactions on social networks, for example, and among the youth who have taken this dimension of culture in hand, which is extremely important.
39. The **Secretary** presentedsome practical information, reminding thedelegations of the press conference during the lunch break, as well as of several side events taking place.
40. The **Chairperson** adjourned the morning session.

*[Monday, 28 November, afternoon session]*

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

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

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations, returning to the discussion on agenda item 5.
2. The delegation of **Panama** congratulated the Chairperson, thanking him for the wonderful opportunity to be in Rabat after years of virtual meetings, and seeing first-hand this living heritage. It extended thanks to the Secretary and his team for their tireless commitment and efforts in helping delegations reinforce intangible cultural heritage in their countries. Panama has worked for almost twenty years on this subject and attaches great importance to the Convention and the spaces created for cooperation. It thanked the Secretariat for the International Assistance that had been provided to many countries to enable community leaders to safeguard the living heritage of Afro-descendant peoples in Cuba and Central America. This means that they can create inventories and build capacity in the region, and it was hoped that this will be an opportunity to encourage everyone to look at different ways of cooperating and drawing on the available resources. The delegation also hoped for a successful and fruitful meeting, as all the communities and bearers of traditions were watching and waiting.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked Panama for its intervention and warm words, as well as for the message that all the delegations share in relation to the communities.
4. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked Morocco for its excellent organization of the Committee, and the Secretariat for its excellent work. It joined its voice to the Committee Members supporting more assistance to capacity building, especially in under-represented countries, namely, in Africa and among SIDS. The delegation concluded by inviting the delegates to visit the Saudi exhibition with live demonstrations of crafts and Saudi coffee.
5. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** congratulated Morocco for its welcome and wonderful reception and presentation of its rich intangible cultural heritage. It was happy to meet in person again after two years of interruption as a result of the pandemic. This face-to-face meeting allowed delegates to discover this beautiful country and its cultural diversity. Côte d’Ivoire congratulated the Chairperson on his election and expressed its full satisfaction with the intensity of the activities conducted by the Secretariat and with its comprehensive report. Among other areas of satisfaction, it noted the excellent results at the end of the overall reflection on the listing mechanisms, and the update of the thematic initiatives.
6. The **Chairperson** thanked Côte d’Ivoire for its kind words about Morocco, inviting the Secretary to respond to some of the questions raised.
7. The **Secretary** thanked the Committee Members for the many encouraging remarks on the report and on the Secretariat’s work, which he was very pleased to hear. He in turn expressed his appreciation to each and every one of the Committee Members who commented on the work. On the question of supporting nominations from countries with a low number of files, the Secretary reminded the Committee that there already exists a provision by which countries wishing to inscribe an element on the Urgent Safeguarding List can get direct technical support from the Fund of the Convention. However, unfortunately, the Secretariat had not received any requests in the last two or three years under this mechanism. He reminded the States Parties that this is beyond capacity-building and is a direct support to States to help them elaborate a nomination file to the Urgent Safeguarding List. However, the current Operational Directives limited this direct support to nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List. The Secretary then responded to the two questions posed by Switzerland regarding the twentieth anniversary and on use of the emblem. For the twentieth anniversary, the Secretariat had already initiated work primarily through UNESCO Field Office networks, which will get in touch with each country’s National Commissions. He acknowledged that Europe was more limited in terms of Field Offices, which was perhaps the reason Switzerland had not yet received any news. The idea is to initiate a series of activities around the twentieth anniversary. A webpage will be created where activities and events can be shared. The Secretariat was also looking into publications to raise awareness, social media campaigns, and so on. The plan was to target youth with publications amplifying the voice of practitioners in the communities. The Secretariat was also considering an event at UNESCO around 17 October 2023, that is, the day the Convention was adopted by the General Conference in 2003. The Field Offices would connect with the various institutions in their respective countries to coordinate and conduct a series of events. The Secretariat will also launch an awareness-raising campaign on the importance of intangible cultural heritage, working with different media, including a special publication on the twenty years of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the actual anniversary event at Headquarters in late 2023.
8. Concerning the emblem, the **Secretary** understood and agreed that there is a rather heavy procedure for its use, as set out in the Operational Directives. There are two places that govern the use of the emblem. The first is the Operational Directives of the Convention and the second is the General Conference of UNESCO, as the logo of the Convention is always associated with the logo of UNESCO. The Secretariat therefore operated under two sets of rules on how to use this logo, which explained some of the complexities involved. The Secretary would try to see if some of the bureaucratic procedures could be simplified, which would indeed be a good thing. However, this was not a decision that can be made by the Secretariat as this process is governed by the rules of both bodies mentioned. The Secretary reiterated his appreciation and thanks for all the positive comments received from many of the delegations.
9. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to Observers.
10. The delegation of **France** thanked the Chairperson for the way he was conducting the Committee’s work and for the exceptional welcome. France is strongly committed to the Convention and the protection of intangible heritage, which was materialized, for example, in 2022 with its voluntary contribution of €100,000 to strengthen the Secretariat’s action in the implementation of the Convention. France also made a contribution to capacity building two years ago, which made it possible to work on capacity building projects in Ghana and The Gambia, both of which would be presented at a UNESCO side event the following day. For the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, France encouraged all the actors involved in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in France to celebrate this anniversary and to promote partnerships. For example, it planned to organize an event that will network the nineteen accredited NGOs to exercise advisory functions to the Committee. Similarly, France was considering the creation of an official certificate of thematic inclusion of living heritage, which will be ready for the 2023 edition of the European Heritage Days,[[10]](#footnote-11) to enhance the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage but which are not inscribed on the UNESCO Lists. Finally, it agreed with Switzerland on the complex procedure for the use of the UNESCO emblem.
11. The delegation of **Palestine** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, which meant so much to the Arab Group, expressing thanks and gratitude to Morocco, His Majesty the King, and the Government for hosting this event. The delegation thanked the Secretariat and the Secretary for the excellent report, the quality of the documents, and the information shared, which presented the ambitious implementation of the Convention. The revision of the Operational Directives with regard to the listing mechanisms was an important achievement. Reflection shall continue for a broader implementation of Article 18, and the delegation thanked Sweden for its generous financial support to this end. It commended the actions of the Secretariat for the safeguarding of intangible heritage in crises and emergencies, and asked that these actions be extended to all affected areas and regions of conflict and other emergency cases, including occupied Palestine. The delegation commended the Secretariat for the ongoing preparations for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, announcing that the State of Palestine was also preparing a special event on this occasion.
12. The delegation of **Malawi** joined others in congratulating the Chairperson on his election, and Morocco for the warm reception during the opening ceremony. The selection of food and cultural performances were particularly representative of the incredible hospitality of the Moroccan people. The delegation recognized the enormous work carried out by the Secretariat, commending it for the support received by Malawi in its implementation of its International Assistance project, despite the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented large gatherings of communities. Without these gatherings, it is very difficult to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. However, the Secretariat was understanding, and through the extension of the project, Malawi was able to implement it successfully.
13. The **Minister of Culture of Albania**, H.E. Ms Elva Margariti, congratulated Morocco for its excellent organization in hosting this meeting. It was especially a pleasure for everyone to convene together in person in this Committee after three years. The Ministry of Culture of Albania set intangible cultural heritage as one of its priorities. It had made significant progress in community-based activities to increase sustainable development. It had finalized the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage with the support of the International Assistance Fund, for which the Ministry officially thanked the Secretariat. At the same time, Albania is constantly training young experts in the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. The Albanian Government started a national programme called ‘Art and Crafts’ which, among other things, aims to support intangible cultural heritage transmission in schools through formal and non-formal learning activities. In the policy’s agenda, intangible cultural heritage is included as an integral part of the revitalization strategy of cultural heritage in Albania. In the spirit of the Convention, the Ministry initiated new collaborations for multinational files. Especially in today’s context, it strongly believes that multinational files are an added value to increase dialogue and further cooperation and peace. The delegation underlined the importance of being present at this session, not only to meet each other in person, but to share good practices and demonstrate commitment to working together in these challenging and uncertain times, proving once again that culture is what brings people together.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked the Minister of Culture of Albania for honouring the Committee with her presence.
15. The delegation of **Cuba** thanked Morocco for its hospitality and wonderful gala, which was a window into the Arab and African world, and wished the Chairperson every success. It thanked the Secretary and the Secretariat for the high-quality report, and for all the details and time it took to explain. There are three key themes in this report for Cuba, such as capacity building, which continues to be an essential element in the strategy of the Convention as it approaches its twentieth anniversary. There was also a need to focus on training trainers in the communities. Cuba has a training of trainer’s programme and, in this regard, has created a university course about cultural heritage. In addition, harmonizing this with other Conventions is also very important to Cuba. Indeed, the Secretariat is working on this topic and the delegation acknowledged the need for intersectoral work with the education and science sectors, noting the progress made in this regard. The MONDIACULT Declaration[[11]](#footnote-12) is a fundamental instrument for cultural policy and sustainable development. The delegation also believed in harmonization with other UNESCO Conventions. This was seen with the 2005 Convention,[[12]](#footnote-13) where there exists a fine line when considering cultural and creative industries, with UNESCO becoming an essential driver, especially with regard to the UN Agenda 2030, as well as to MONDIACULT, which is also a very important framework in that sense. UNESCO must play a key role in aligning its noble objectives with the creative and cultural industries, which must involve communities and focus on intangible heritage, as well as focusing on its economic aspects, especially as commercialization is often seen as something negative. Looking at the future of the Convention after the first twenty years, it was noted that the spirit of the Convention has had an impact on peace and sustainable development in the domain of culture. This spirit must also be present in its governing bodies, such as the Committee and the Evaluation Body. The delegation regretted the imbalance noted by the Group of Latin America and Caribbean (GRULAC) countries and others, as well as the measures required to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, adding that the Evaluation Body and other governing bodies do not necessarily take into account these concerns. Cuba has adopted a law on culture, with the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage integrated into its cultural policy. It thanked the Secretariat and the Culture Sector for all their work.
16. The delegation of **Lithuania** congratulated the Chairperson on his presidency and for his active personal participation in favour of this Convention. It was very grateful for this extraordinary welcome from Morocco, whose traditional Moroccan culture was presented with so much respect and warmth. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for all its efforts and excellent work done during the period considered, congratulating it for the many activities conducted, in particular: (a) the completion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms; (b) the process of implementing periodic reports; (c) capacity building; and (d) the safeguarding of living heritage in emergency situations, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine and, in particular, the activities undertaken in response to the needs of the displaced communities, including schoolchildren, and Ukrainian schools. Lithuania undertook several assistance initiatives for Ukrainian refugees, which included 25,000 children, on Lithuanian territory. It was hoped that all these global and national initiatives will continue. The delegation also appreciated the Secretariat’s assistance and the support provided to the work of the guiding bodies, as well as the communication carried out in this regard. It congratulated the Secretariat on the three thematic initiatives to strengthen sustainable development with respect to intangible cultural heritage, which represented the essential challenges of our time. Lithuania responded to the Secretariat’s call with regard to online surveys aimed at developing guidance notes and, while recognizing the importance of this activity, requested the Secretariat to initiate the surveys a little earlier prior to the Committee session, if possible. The delegation thanked its partners in Finland for the launch of a sub-regional project in 2021, called ‘Livind’,[[13]](#footnote-14), which had gathered nine countries to discuss relevant access to sustainable development. The project, which will end in 2023, was a good example of excellent partnership in the field of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation supported the draft decision.
17. The **Chairperson** thanked Lithuania for its intervention and welcomed the President of the Executive Board of Serbia to the meeting.
18. The delegation of **Serbia** thanked the Chairperson for the heart-warming welcome experienced since its arrival in Rabat, congratulating him on his leadership. It thanked the Secretariat for its report, noting the numerous significant activities related to the better functioning of the Convention itself, but also with regard to its harmonization with other culture Conventions. The delegation believed that the process followed in the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, although challenging, was successful and will contribute to a better balance of inscriptions and cooperation among Member States with the communities that safeguard elements of intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, the determination of thematic initiatives within the Convention, in accordance with the Medium-Term Strategy until 2029, provides a clear direction for future work within the Convention, while dealing with contemporary issues such as climate change and urbanization. The delegation especially emphasized the importance of continuous action on capacity building for the safeguarding of living heritage within the global strategy for capacity building for intangible cultural heritage. In May 2022, Serbia organized activities within this programme with a workshop on safeguarding at the national level at the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade. This workshop was aimed at improving the work of experts who are actively involved in the safeguarding of living heritage. The delegation congratulated the Secretariat for its successful implementation of the regional principle of periodic reporting. This methodology used for periodic reporting was also significant for the implementation of the pilot project Culture 2030 Indicators in Serbia.[[14]](#footnote-15) It believed that this is a great example of synergies between projects, especially after the reporting cycle for all culture Conventions has been finalized with this new methodology, which should be continued and developed further.
19. The delegation of **Djibouti** spoke of the pleasure to take part in this seventeenth session after two years of online work. The Convention was ratified and recognized on 17 September 2003, and much had been achieved in a short period of time thanks to the intervention of eminent personalities who knew how to breathe life and dynamism into it. The delegation congratulated the Chairperson on his election, remarking on his wisdom and know-how that would help him carry out the mission entrusted to him. It welcomed the generosity of Morocco and its deep desire for sharing encounters and culture, which was evidenced by the wealth of its thousand-year-old culture featured in the ceremony the previous evening. Indeed, Morocco had organized in 1989 the Francophonie games. Furthermore, the delegation highlighted the work of the Secretariat in these various achievements. It congratulated and thanked the team under the direction of the Secretary who tirelessly contribute to the achievement of the various projects validated by the Committee and the General Assembly of this Convention. Djibouti had benefited from funding for urgent safeguarding for the Xeedho project, which was launched that week, for which it thanked UNESCO. To compensate for this imbalance observed in terms of inscriptions owing to a lack of capacity building, the delegation asked that Djibouti be able to benefit from training of trainers so as to train as many facilitators as possible. It was true that UNESCO was already doing a great deal in the field of capacity building. However, by training facilitators at the subregional level who can meet the needs of the different countries in terms of projects, this would make up for the delay and thus remedy the imbalance noted by various States Parties. The delegation concluded by congratulating UNESCO once again for the success of MONDIACULT. This step was an important and historic phase that opened up new perspectives, integrating culture into sustainable development.
20. The delegation of **Norway** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, adding that it was happy to be at the Committee *in praesentia*, especially in beautiful Morocco. Norway thanked and commended the Secretariat for its consistently excellent work, stating that the Secretariat’s efforts and achievements were remarkable. It expressed support for the reflection work on the listing mechanisms and especially Article 18. The delegation was delighted to see that the evaluation on the reflection process so far had led to new insights that will help safeguard and ensure the sustainability and legitimacy of the listing mechanisms as well as of the Convention itself. In the forthcoming years, it wished to see emphasis placed on the role of indigenous peoples and communities in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as they play an integral and significant role in safeguarding, as was underlined in MONDIACULT in Mexico. The delegation wished to see stronger recognition and acknowledgment of this aspect, as well a stronger degree of their involvement. This should be embodied in the spirit of the Convention as well as in the fulfilment of the SDG goals. Indeed, the issue of indigenous peoples and communities should be consistently emphasized and go beyond mere outreach activities; it should be reflected in work and activity plans. The Convention also has the potential to play a role in the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032),[[15]](#footnote-16) which will also follow the decisions made at MONDIACULT 2022. The delegation voiced strong support for the work on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, highlighting the role of the Heritage Emergency Fund.
21. The delegation of **Armenia** joined the previous speakers in congratulating the Chairperson and thanking the Government of Morocco for hosting this important event. It also thanked the Secretariat for the excellent report and for the impressive work and initiatives implemented. In particular, the delegation underlined the encouraging outcomes from the global reflection on the listing mechanisms as well as the marked improvement in the submission rate of periodic reports thanks to the reform of the periodic reporting system. The delegation also welcomed the project implemented for African countries and SIDS in the fields of living heritage and education, capacity building and safeguarding. Another important field is the safeguarding of living heritage in emergencies. Living heritage throughout the world is increasingly affected by emergencies, including conflicts and disasters. Emergencies directly threaten the transmission and viability of intangible cultural heritage, which provides a crucial foundation for identity and the sustainability of communities. That is why the safeguarding of living heritage in emergencies is of the utmost importance for the protection of lives and the well-being of its bearers. The delegation praised once again the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard. Indeed, in recent years, Armenia has become a home for refugees from Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh. The Government of Armenia had taken necessary measures to address the humanitarian needs of refugees, including the safeguarding and transmission of their living heritage. However, due to the complex issue and the diversity of community-based specificities, the experience and assistance of UNESCO will be of great help. In this regard, it wished to request that the Secretariat provide more information on the existing mechanisms, in particular, for community-based needs identification and capacity building for safeguarding refugees’ living heritage in a new environment.
22. The delegation of **Gabon** congratulated the Chairperson on presiding over the seventeenth session of the Committee, congratulating the Government of Morocco and the people of Morocco for their great hospitality and the beautiful opening ceremony. It congratulated the Secretariat for its very detailed and relevant report. The delegation supported the remarks made by Burkina Faso and Rwanda, among others, that more African elements must be inscribed as intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, it called for greater capacity building and training.
23. The delegation of **Lebanon** congratulated the Chairperson for presiding over this session, and congratulated and thanked Morocco for the memorable opening ceremony and for the organization of this session. It thanked the Secretary and his team for the huge efforts they deploy to expand the Convention, and for the high-quality report presented. Lebanon is very much committed to this Convention. Although Lebanon has two elements inscribed, work in the last few years had focused on capacity building and forming a national network of trainers. It had also focused on raising awareness, taking this Convention to schools and universities. Unfortunately, the main issue is the lack of resources, especially in the last two years due to the unprecedented crisis in the country. As it prepared for the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, Lebanon will have several activities in this regard and was happy to announce that it had submitted a file, which unites all Lebanese for discussion by the Committee at its next meeting in 2023.
24. The delegation of **Haiti** thanked Morocco for its warm welcome and for the magical evening that deployed a dazzling array of Moroccan know-how. It thanked the Secretariat, particularly, the Secretary, and his team for preparing this report, which reflected their hard work, often behind the scenes, within the framework of this Convention. Haiti reiterated thanks to Japan, especially to H.E. Ambassador Atsuyuki Oike, for his crucial work as Chair of the working group on the listing mechanisms. Haiti supported the remarks made by Paraguay, Panama and Cuba, as well as Rwanda and Burkina Faso, and reiterated its attachment to the fact that the Convention is a space for the promotion and inclusive articulation of all the priorities of the Organization, in particular, Priority Africa, gender, youth and SIDS.
25. The delegation of **Egypt** joined the previous speakers in expressing congratulations to Morocco for hosting the seventeenth session of the Committee, as well as for the memorable opening ceremony. Egypt was currently implementing a project on inventorying craftsmanship in historic Cairo with the support of the Convention. Egypt also encouraged NGOs to implement the instruments of the Convention and to apply for accreditation so as to cooperate with one another on the safeguarding of intangible heritage and to implement the countries’ safeguarding plans with the full engagement of the communities. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its remarkable efforts and support in capacity building, as well as for the close monitoring of the process of periodic reporting, which it was currently preparing to cover the past six years. It looked forward to celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Convention.
26. The delegation of **Jordan** extended thanks and gratitude to Morocco for its hospitality, generosity and warm reception, thanking the communities for sharing their rich intangible cultural heritage as witnessed the previous evening. Jordan has mobilized institutional work, developed policies and set strategies related to intangible cultural heritage on the basis of a shared methodology among stakeholders, by taking into account UNESCO’s well-defined cultural policies and its orientation in this field. The Jordanian Government, represented by the Minister of Culture and other governmental and non-governmental actors, with the full involvement of communities, groups and individuals, has – since ratification – applied specific, tailored measures to continue safeguarding its intangible cultural heritage and fulfil the requirements of the sustainable development goals. These measures include building the capacities of communities, raising awareness about the importance of intangible cultural heritage, supporting educational institutions introduce intangible cultural heritage content into their educational plans, modifying existing legislation and constitutional provisions, enhancing media and information channels for greater awareness raising on the importance of intangible cultural heritage, and supporting institutions to conduct research on the best practices for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in cooperation with communities. At the regional level, Jordan is taking measures aimed at safeguarding shared intangible cultural heritage with other Arab countries through international organizations and the governments of the concerned countries and their communities, especially ALECSO[[16]](#footnote-17) and ICESCO.[[17]](#footnote-18) Taking the principles of the Convention as an approach and method that has proven its usefulness for nearly two decades, Jordan also benefitted from the experience of countries on the global level on safeguarding intangible heritage.
27. The **Chairperson** thanked all the speakers for their extremely positive contributions. He noted that capacity building was widely mentioned, as well as reflections on the inscription procedures, under-represented countries, heritage and sustainable development, and the lack of balance in relation to the approval of files, all of which were themes that States Parties would further examine under the Convention. The Secretariat and the Committee would also have the opportunity to delve more deeply into these subjects and provide the best answers possible. With no further comments, he turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/5) **adopted.**

**ITEM 6.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**

**Document :** *[LHE/22/17.COM/6.a Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-6.a-_Rev.-EN.docx)*

*See*[*24 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/6a-periodic-reporting-usl-01286)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 6.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the examination of item 6a and the examination of the reports by States Parties on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
2. The **Secretary** presented the item, which concerned the ninth cycle of periodic reporting for elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, whose reports were submitted in December 2021. These reports analyse three main topics related to the safeguarding of these elements, namely: (a) the effectiveness of the safeguarding plan; (b) the participation of communities in the implementation of the safeguarding plan and in the preparation of the report; and (c) the viability and risks associated with the element. The Secretary invited Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat to provide more details on this item.
3. Ms Fumiko Ohinata of **the** **Secretariat** presented working document 6.a, which provides information on reports presented for examination by the present session of the Committee. This report concerns four cycles: (a) eight first reports on elements that were inscribed between 2017 and 2019; (b) two second reports on elements inscribed in 2013; (c) thirteen third reports on elements inscribed between 2009 and 2013; and (d) one fourth report on an element inscribed in 2009. She would review the key points raised in these twenty-three reports along three topics. The first topic relates to the effectiveness of the safeguarding plans. In this cycle, it was seen that institutional and policy frameworks were strengthened in safeguarding processes. Transmission and awareness raising is increasingly taking place in museums, libraries and other similar institutions. In some cases, competitions and festivals were also used for the same purposes. Although community-based funding was utilized in some cases, in general, a lack of sustained funding continues to be an issue for several elements. Addressing environmental challenges and managing natural resources were also crucial features of safeguarding elements. Managing the supply of raw materials and the impact of climate change was reported as an issue for several elements. Some reports also considered the management of a World Heritage site in the process of safeguarding an element of living heritage. Economic activities continue to be given prominence in the reports. These activities have the potential of securing livelihoods in elements, such as crafts and the performing arts, and therefore provide opportunities for ensuring the viability of an element. At the same time, these activities also present risks of over-commercialization and a reduction in the diversity of cultural expressions. The impact of the pandemic was also observed in many of the reports in this cycle. Some activities were scaled back, and others were moved to online modalities. At the same time, it was encouraging to note that some States also provided economic support to vulnerable bearers during this crisis. Four elements in this cycle also reported on the positive impact of International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** then presented the second topic relating to community participation. Several reports showed that there was an increase in the number of practitioners, and a wider scope of community members were engaged, including youth. Some States also paid attention to the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. The involvement of communities throughout all stages of safeguarding is of primary importance and it was therefore encouraging to see this involvement enhanced during this reporting cycle. Changes in gender roles were also reported, with both women and men getting involved in practices traditionally performed by the other gender. It was also good to see more women taking on leadership responsibilities in safeguarding and other activities. Many reports also highlighted the role of NGOs and local associations in safeguarding. However, traditional and customary modes of local management were reported to be weakening in some elements, in contrast to the increasing role of national and local administrative structures.
5. Reporting on the third topic related to viability and current risks, **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that, as in the previous cycle, intergenerational transmission remained a challenge for many elements. Many bearers are of advanced age, and engaging younger generations remains a challenge acknowledged in many reports. At the same time, there is increasing recognition of the importance of local language education for transmitting knowledge, wisdom and oral traditions. There was also a trend towards a decreasing diversity of expressions. This is partially linked to the impact of tourism, festivals and competitions, which has led to shortened repertoires or the repetition of certain forms of performance. Having gone through the analysis of the three topics, she touched briefly on the transitional calendar for the transfer of elements between the Lists of the Convention. In this cycle, six reports from two States mentioned an aspiration to transfer an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. This is good news because it means that the viability of elements previously considered to be in need of urgent safeguarding had improved to the point that they could be considered for transfer to the Representative List. The new procedure for transferring an element between the different Lists of the Convention was one of the concrete outcomes that emerged from the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which led to the revisions of the Operational Directives by the ninth session of the General Assembly. This new procedure requires that a request to transfer an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List be submitted using Form ICH-02 USL to RL, which will be attached to the periodic reporting Form ICH-11. The Secretariat would finalize all the forms[[18]](#footnote-19) before the end of 2022. The reason for attaching the transfer request to the periodic reporting form is precisely to ensure that this request is based on sound reporting and to demonstrate the effectiveness of safeguarding actions in improving the viability of the element.
6. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** further explained that the timing of the completion of the global reflection in July 2022, however, meant that the States Parties that had already submitted reports in this cycle, and States Parties submitting reports in December 2022 for the next cycle, would not be able to benefit from this new form. The Secretariat thus proposed to the Committee to consider, on an exceptional basis, a ‘transitional calendar’ to help these two groups of States submit transfer requests, if they so wished. According to the proposed ‘transitional calendar’, these States would be able to submit transfer requests by the deadline of 31 March 2023. This will enable their requests to be examined by the Evaluation Body in 2024, and subsequently be presented to the Committee for examination at its nineteenth session in 2024. This ‘transitional calendar’ would benefit the States whose reports were about to be examined, as well as those States whose reports will be examined in the next session of the Committee. In addition, during this evaluation process, it would also be possible for the Evaluation Body to recommend that the Committee include successful safeguarding experiences in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This is a first step towards achieving the aim of the global reflection to make the Lists and the Register of the Convention more interconnected, and work more fluidly and dynamically together.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked Ms Ohinata, opening the floor for comments before the examination of the individual reports and the corresponding draft decisions.
8. The delegation of **Malaysia** thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive document as well as the submitting States for having reported on the state of their elements and the safeguarding measures in place. The system for reporting on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List is essential work as it informs the change of status of the element and the efficiency of the safeguarding measures, with implications for the Committee and the risks confronting the element. The involvement of the community bearers is also crucial as it links to the formal and non-formal education sectors. Malaysia appreciated the efforts of the Committee for its assessment of the periodic reports. The periodic reporting is an important mechanism under the framework of the Convention, allowing States to collect information on the current viability and progress of the implementation of safeguarding plans of all the elements. It also assesses the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures. With regard to the new procedures and forms required to transfer an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List, Malaysia highlighted the limited duration suggested for the transitional measures of transfer requests set at 31 March and proposed an extension to this date. This would allow States to adequately prepare the document and engage the community, considering the forms would only be available at the end of 2022.
9. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for its examination of the reports, as well as States Parties for their submitted reports, congratulating those that had reported on the effectiveness of their safeguarding plans despite the COVID pandemic. Submitting the reports on time is indeed crucial for successful urgent safeguarding. The delegation was happy to hear that States mostly reported an increase in the number of practitioners, especially among youth. Unfortunately, new risks were addressed in updated safeguarding plans such that there was a gap between identified threats and planned safeguarding measures. The delegation expected that elements relevant to the transfer to the Representative List will take advantage of the deadline by the first quarter of 2023.
10. The delegation of **Ethiopia** expressed its appreciation of the wonderful Moroccan hospitality, as well as the way the Chairperson was successfully managing the meeting. It supported the remarks made by Malaysia regarding the time needed to present the revised versions and it therefore also recommended an extension to the deadline.
11. The **Chairperson** noted that an amendment was already planned in relation to the question of deadlines raised by Malaysia and Ethiopia. He then turned to the draft decisions for the individual reports, beginning with the eight first reports of States Parties.
12. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Dikopelo, folk music of Bakgatla ba Kgafela in Kgatleng district** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.1] submitted by **Botswana**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.1) **adopted.**
13. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Colombian-Venezuela llano work songs** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.2] submitted by **Colombia and Venezuela** (Bolivarian Republic of). With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.2) **adopted.**
14. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Sega tambour Chagos** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.3] submitted by **Mauritius**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.3) **adopted.**
15. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.4] submitted by **Mongolia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.4)**adopted.**
16. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Taskiwin, martial dance of the western High Atlas**, [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.5] submitted by **Morocco**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.5)**adopted.**
17. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Whistled language** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.6] submitted by **Türkiye**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.6)**adopted.**
18. The **Chairperson** presented the first report, **Al Azi, the art of performing praise, pride and fortitude poetry** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.7] submitted by **United Arab Emirates**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.7**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.7) **adopted.**
19. The **Chairperson** presented the second report, **Chovqan, a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game in the Republic of Azerbaijan** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.8] submitted by **Azerbaijan**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.8**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.8) **adopted.**
20. The **Chairperson** presented the second report, **Mongolian calligraphy** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.9] submitted by **Mongolia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.9)**adopted.**
21. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Qiang New Year Festival** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.10] submitted by **China**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.10)**adopted.**
22. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Traditional design and practices for building Chinese wooden arch bridges**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.11] submitted by **China**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.11**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.11)**adopted.**
23. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Traditional Li textile techniques: spinning, dyeing, weaving and embroidering**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.12] submitted by **China**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.12**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.12)**adopted.**
24. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Cantu in paghjella, a secular and liturgical oral tradition of Corsica**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.13] submitted by **France**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.13) **adopted.**
25. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Nan Pa’ch ceremony**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.14] submitted by **Guatemala**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.14) **adopted.**
26. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Traditions and practices associated to the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.15] submitted by **Kenya**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.15) **adopted.**
27. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Suiti cultural space** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.16] submitted by **Latvia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.16**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.16) **adopted.**
28. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Sanké mon, collective fishing rite of the Sanké**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.17] submitted by **Mali**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.17**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.17) **adopted.**
29. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Mongol Biyelgee, Mongolian traditional folk dance**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.18] submitted by **Mongolia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.18**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.18) **adopted.**
30. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Mongol Tuuli, Mongolian epic**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.19] submitted by **Mongolia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.19**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.19) **adopted.**
31. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Traditional music of the Tsuur** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.20] submitted by **Mongolia**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.20**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.20) **adopted.**
32. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Empaako tradition of the Batooro, Banyoro, Batuku, Batagwenda and Banyabindi of western Uganda**[draft decision 17.COM 6.a.21] submitted by **Uganda**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.21**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.21) **adopted.**
33. The **Chairperson** presented the third report, **Ca trù singing** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.22] submitted by **Viet Nam**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 6.a.22**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.22)**adopted.**
34. The **Chairperson** presented the fourth report, **The Rite of the Kalyady Tsars (Christmas Tsars)** [draft decision 17.COM 6.a.23] submitted by **Belarus**. With no amendments received, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.a.23**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a.23) **adopted.**
35. In the temporary absence of the Chairperson, the **Vice-Chairperson** **of the Republic of Korea** turned to the chapeau decision of this item on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no amendments or comments to paragraphs 1 to 8, they were duly adopted. Paragraph 9 received an amendment by Malaysia.
36. The delegation of **Malaysia** proposed a minor amendment to the transitional measure and suggested to change the original date given as 31 March to 30 June 2023. This would allow the States Parties concerned to have ample time to engage with the communities and to better prepare the dossiers.
37. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted support from Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Bangladesh.
38. The delegation of **Czechia** asked whether the term could be extended to three months.
39. The **Secretary** remarked that the deadline for the transitional measure would depend on the number of requests received and that the Secretariat would likely be able to accommodate the requests within the timeframe, but would alert the Bureau should the situation become problematic in case of a high volume of requests.
40. Following the explanation, the delegation of **Switzerland** supported the amendment by Malaysia.
41. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted no further comments or objections, and paragraph 9 was duly adopted. There were no amendments or comments to paragraphs 10 and 11, which were duly adopted. **The Vice-Chairperson declared** **Decision** [**17.COM 6.a**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.a) **adopted.**
42. The **Vice-Chairperson** opened the floor to States Parties that had submitted reports.
43. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked and appreciated the hospitality of the Government of Morocco. Azerbaijan thanked the Committee for its decision regarding the status of the element, ‘Chovqan, a traditional Karabakh horse-riding game’ inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2013. It was pleased to see that the efforts of the communities in safeguarding this traditional game had been acknowledged by the Committee based on its second report on the status of this element. The inscription of Chovqan in 2013 has had a positive impact on the practice and transmission of the game. It reinforced the functions of the element for game practitioners and raised the visibility of the element nationally. The element continued to strengthen the feeling of identity and cultural belonging for its communities. Younger generations of horse-riders are becoming steadily more and more interested in the practice of the game. Communities continued to transmit knowledge about the game within families in both rural and in urban areas. Even though the safeguarding plans contributed to achieving positive results, their implementation had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and more measures were needed to sustain the viability of the element and support transmission, while placing a special focus on the interest of young people and the availability of the Karabakh breed of horses. The report results from a wide consultation process launched in May 2021 involving stakeholders, communities and community organizations. The delegation congratulated the two main community organizations, Karabakh Horses Amateur Association and the Azerbaijan Equestrian Federation, for their efforts in sustaining the culture of the Chovqan game and supporting the practitioners. The experience in preparing this report had been very important for all the stakeholders involved and for the safeguarding process as a whole, which would continue to be monitored. Azerbaijan was committed to further contributing to active safeguarding efforts, despite the challenges, by supporting the transmission and promotion of the element.
44. The **Vice-Chairperson** presented the multinational element of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia.
45. The delegation of **Colombia** was represented by Ms Leonor Zalabata Torres, a member of the Arhuaco Indigenous people of Colombia and the first Indigenous Permanent Representative of Colombia at the United Nations in New York, appointed by the President Gustavo Petro. For Colombia, the safeguarding of the llano work songs of Colombia and Venezuela not only means intercultural recognition of traditional ancestral wisdom, it is also a participatory process in which children, young people, adults and bearers share a sense of responsibility and respect for the element. Furthermore, it represents the will to transmit, from generation to generation, the essential condition to safeguard practices linked to the profession, lifestyle and cultural identity of the community. Ms Torres highlighted that despite challenges linked to the safeguarding of the element, the Government had implemented a number of measures to cement the transmission and increase the number of practitioners, with a special focus on young people. This aimed to construct a multicoloured democracy founded on freedoms, solidarity, respect for diversity and human dignity in which the diverse communities are the true guardians of life, the territory and biodiversity. She invited Venezuela to continue to work together with Colombia to implement action and engagements that the countries share in order to promote peace, culture, the protection of rights, gender equality and climate change, in line with local indigenous knowledge systems.
46. The delegation of **Venezuela** (Bolivarian Republic of) passed on the greetings of its people and of the President of Venezuela, with a special thanks to the organizers of this session, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Chairperson. The decision adopted in 2016 concerning the safeguarding of cultural heritage had led to the implementation of activities in this area, which is how the joint nomination, involving Venezuela and Colombia, came into being. Venezuela is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, hence the reason for a clear commitment between the state and communities that practice the work songs of the llano. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its positive evaluation. This is mainly due to the efforts of the bearers of this element, particularly during the pandemic, to protect ancestral traditions and knowledge in conjunction with the Government. Given the importance of the Convention, the Venezuelan Parliament had been in close contact with the communities practising this living heritage so as to pass a law on intangible cultural heritage. This came into force in September 2021 and represents an enhanced commitment to the necessary resources to protect and safeguard the work songs of the llano. Venezuela, together with Colombia, will progress further in terms of an alliance to safeguard cultural heritage, which is called for by the peoples of the two countries. The delegation thanked the Committee once again for this new opportunity.
47. The delegation of **Botswana** accepted the Committee’s decision on its first periodic report on Dikopelo folk music of Bakgatla ba Kgafela in Kgatleng District. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its thorough assessment of the report, as well as the Committee for approving the draft decision. The delegation was delighted that the Committee recognized and appreciated the efforts that had been taken to compile this report during the challenges of COVID-19. Botswana also took note of the issues that need to be addressed for the effective implementation of the safeguarding plan for this element, which will be addressed in the next periodic report in 2025. The delegation thanked the Bakgatla ba Kgafela community and the Botswana intangible cultural heritage team for a job well done. It thanked the Government for providing financial and technical resources for the implementation of the safeguarding plan and affirmed its commitment to supporting the implementation of intangible cultural heritage programmes and activities.
48. The delegation of **United Arab Emirates** expressed gratitude to Morocco for its warm hospitality and the array of exceptionally rich cultural heritage that Morocco displayed in the opening ceremony. It thanked UNESCO for continuously supporting the intangible cultural heritage safeguarding process, convinced that the periodic reporting mechanisms contribute to accelerating the implementation of the safeguarding plans. The ‘Art of Al Azi’ was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2017. The relevant authorities in the country nominated Al Azi for inscription given its significance on national occasions in welcoming official delegations and tourists. There was a consensus that this practice should be more widely understood and practised on both community and individual levels. Its inscription had substantially contributed to the following outcomes: (a) an increased number of folklore groups and practitioners in performance art; (b) the presentation of Al Azi performances at social events, celebrations and cultural festivals beyond the scope of national occasions; and (c) spreading awareness of the art of Al Azi in media, particularly through heritage-focused outlets and school curricula, and including Al Azi within the plan of the training institute for performing arts, which is to be established in 2023. The United Arab Emirates is committed to implementing the plan set in the periodic report, with a special focus on increasing community awareness on its importance, as well as increasing the number of practitioners and consolidating its status among other popular performing arts in local society.
49. The delegation of **China** expressed sincere thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality of Morocco. The Committee had examined three reports submitted by China on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. China appreciated the recommendations made by the Committee and promised to take them into account in the following cycles to improve the sustainability of these elements. The delegation also noted in Decision 17.COM 6.a that requests for the transfer of elements from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List may be submitted by States Parties that have submitted reports on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List for consideration by the next session before 30 June 2023. Extending the deadline may indeed ensure the broad and full participation of affected communities throughout the transfer process.
50. The delegation of **Türkiye** thanked the Moroccan authorities for their warm welcome, and congratulated the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their successful efforts. It expressed sincere gratitude to the Committee and the Evaluation Body for their decision on the current situation of the ‘Whistle language’. It is the first report on the status of the element inscribed in 2017 on the Urgent Safeguarding List. Whistle language, also known as bird language, is used to communicate across long distances between dispersed settlements, creating a sound with the help of fingers, tongue, teeth, lips and cheeks. It is practised by persons of all ages and gender in agricultural communities, mostly in Kuskoy village, the bird village. Whistled language enforces social cohesion and solidarity among the people living in the region. In the last five years since its inscription, with the implementation of the whistle language safeguarding plan, there was an observed increase in the number of practitioners, as well as an increase in the recognition of the element. Türkiye will continue to focus on updating its safeguarding plan, developing opportunities and possibilities for the transmission of the element, increasing the number of practitioners, and raising awareness about whistle language.
51. The delegation of **Mauritius** congratulated and thanked Morocco for the warm welcome and hospitality, thanking the Secretariat for its remarkable work and for all the support provided to States Parties. Mauritius, and especially the Chagossian community, welcomed the decision of the Committee on its first biennial report submitted on the safeguarding of ‘Sega tambour Chagos’ following its inscription in 2019 on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The Sega tambour Chagos is one of the rich elements of intangible cultural heritage of the Chagos Archipelago, which forms part of the territory of Mauritius. Mauritius is committed to ensuring the safeguarding of the Sega tambour Chagos. It is an important social medium for communication among family members and the general public, bringing them together for meaningful and memorable exchanges coupled with intense emotions. It narrates the story of the Chagossian community in their daily lives and their aspiration to return to their birthplace. The Government of Mauritius, through the National Heritage Fund and under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, has ensured that the community is engaged in its safeguarding. The Government has provided financial and other logistical support to the Chagossian Welfare Fund to sensitize the youth on the importance of this heritage. It was fully committed to getting youth involved. There had been positive developments in safeguarding this intangible heritage thanks to the tireless efforts of the Government, the community and the Chagossian Welfare Fund. In an effort to further cement the new positive developments and ensure the element is on the path to recovery, in October 2021 two tambour Chagos schools were launched to give exposure to this element to children and youth. They have been involved in several national cultural events. Mauritius reiterated its commitment to continue its efforts in the safeguarding, promotion and transmission of the Sega tambour Chagos, especially among family members, youth, bearers and the Chagossian community at large. Mauritius fully subscribed to the ideals of UNESCO and is fully committed to the effective implementation of the Conventions, to which it is subscribed, for the welfare and common good of the population. Mauritius will collaborate fully with UNESCO in the future and help in its relentless effort to promote and sustain culture and heritage around the world.
52. The delegation of **Latvia** thanked Morocco for hosting this session and the Committee for its decision and thoughtful advice provided for the future safeguarding of Suiti cultural space. Latvia appreciated the unconditional commitment and activity of the Suiti community members in safeguarding their heritage, as well as in building broader partnerships benefitting heritage communities across national borders. It also expressed appreciation of the engagement of Suiti community members in an open dialogue, including through correspondence on the challenges of heritage safeguarding. Novel legislative, policy and financial instruments had been developed in Latvia aimed at achieving balanced intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and development, enhancing the role of intangible and tangible heritage and sustainable regional development, and including the participation of communities in decision-making. Furthermore, the safeguarding of cultural spaces is among respective policy priorities in Latvia. The delegation looks forward to further collaboration among Suiti community members, non-governmental and governmental organizations, and other stakeholders, keeping future generations in mind. It acknowledged the importance of the periodic reporting mechanism and the significance of monitoring the elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, putting common efforts into their safeguarding and exchanging experiences worldwide.
53. The delegation of **Mongolia** expressed gratitude to the Chairperson and Vice-Chair, the Committee Members and the Evaluation Body, thanking Morocco for its warm hospitality. The report was very clear and comprehensive. In this reporting period, Mongolia submitted five elements and is making a continuous effort for the safeguarding of intangible heritage, modifying national laws and regulations on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in this regard. The safeguarding policy and measures in Mongolia are based on the assessment of the viability of intangible cultural heritage and its practitioners. During this reporting period, Mongolia initiated health checks on the practitioners. It was also working on the elaboration of new laws to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, and planned to submit this to parliament in 2023 to improve the viability of intangible cultural heritage and its practitioners.
54. The delegation of **Guatemala** thanked Morocco for the excellent hospitality. Through raising awareness of intangible cultural heritage, it had undertaken measures for the protection and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage of the Nan Pa’ch ceremony, involving the active participation of various communities. During the pandemic, efforts were focused on virtual training workshops, working with the Minister of Culture and Education and local organizations. A training programme for volunteer guardians of intangible cultural heritage was promoted. Work was carried out with 200 volunteers from the Department of San Marcos to promote this intangible cultural heritage in the local language, Mam. It was considered vital that this intangible cultural heritage be passed on to new generations of children and youth. Promoting research and documentation of the related elements was also considered essential. Furthermore, the element was promoted through digital channels. At the same time, Guatemala has developed municipal cultural policies that are centred on San Pedro Sacatepéquez, which is the place where this element exists, in order to promote dialogue and joint actions with the local communities for their own benefit and for their link with nature. The next report will elaborate on the results of the safeguarding plan for the Nan Pa’ch ceremony developed by the communities and that play an important part in showcasing and passing on the knowledge of the elders to younger people.
55. The delegation of **France** has one element inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. This is the secular and liturgical ‘Cantu in paghjella of Corsica’ oral tradition, a magnificent polyphonic form. With the active support of the French State and the Territorial Collectivity of Corsica, this urgent safeguarding mechanism has encouraged local communities to take measures to safeguard the element. Actions have been taken to improve transmission and increase the number of communities of practitioners. This had been achieved by teaching singing in schools where education is given in the Corsican language, among other measures. These measures were taken on the basis of the recommendations contained in the various reports, which continue to be followed.
56. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked all the delegations for having shared their inspiring experiences with the Committee.
57. The **Chairperson** resumed his role, thanking the Vice-Chair of the Republic of Korea for presiding over this item in his absence.

**ITEM 6.b OF THE AGENDA:**

**EXAMINATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE FIRST 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 EUROPE**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/6.b Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-6.b-_Rev.-EN.docx)

*See*[*42 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/6b-periodic-reporting-rl-01285)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 6.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.b)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 6.b and the examination of the reports of the first 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 Europe.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that Article 29 of the Convention stipulates that it is one of the obligations of States Parties to submit to the Committee a report on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention. This report should also 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 shall be sent to the next General Assembly. Europe is the second region to submit periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention following the extensive reform of the periodic reporting cycle, which moved to a regional basis. For this cycle, the reformed exercise continued to show very encouraging results, with 42 out of 44 countries submitting their reports, corresponding to a submission rate of 95 per cent. A graph was projected onto the screen (see page 5 of the working document). As shown, in the early stages of the Convention in 2011, only seven Parties needed to submit reports, hence the high rate. This was followed by significant drop to 16–20 per cent. It was evident that there had been a much higher rate of submitted reports since the reform.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** provided information on the implementation and findings of the periodic reporting for this cycle. The implementation of the new periodic reporting system in Europe had been an enriching experience that brought together many different actors from the intangible cultural heritage sphere. Thanks to the support of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe,[[19]](#footnote-20) a training for national focal points was organized between March and April 2021. Despite the online format of the workshops due to the pandemic, efforts had been made to ensure the exchange and sharing of experiences among participants. In particular, the national focal points were accompanied throughout the reporting exercise. This cycle had produced many positive results at regional and national levels, including the creation of the ‘European Network of Focal Points for the 2003 UNESCO Convention’. Its role goes beyond supporting the reporting exercise and had now become an important platform for networking and regional cooperation in safeguarding living heritage. At the same time, States faced challenges in preparing their reports. The short deadline, the complexity of the form, and limited human and financial resources were among the difficulties highlighted by States Parties. The Secretariat had prepared a short film featuring the testimonies of some of the national focal points and facilitators who participated in this year’s exercise.

*[The film was projected]*

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** remarked that the submission of 42 reports on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of 177 elements inscribed on the Representative List had generated a large and rich amount of data. The Secretariat was still in the process of analysing the data in order to develop an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis by a collaborative research team composed of experienced experts at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. This analytical overview (Annex I of document 6.b Rev, page 8) illustrates divergent and convergent trends, as well as key challenges and opportunities related to safeguarding living heritage in the different countries of the region. While the analytical overview already contains useful observations, as was the case for the Latin America and Caribbean region, a more detailed report will be presented to the committee at its eighteenth session in 2023.
2. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the extremely interesting presentation of the 2022 reporting cycle that had been successfully implemented. He applauded all the States Parties in Europe for their efforts and spirit of coordination, opening the floor for comments.
3. The delegation of **Switzerland** took note of the report and first analysis of the cycle of periodic reports for the European region. With a submission rate of 95 per cent and a large volume of quality data, the exercise was indeed a success. The delegation congratulated all the participants and partners who had embarked on this demanding and complex self-analysis process. It reminded States Parties that these reports should not be politicized but focused on safeguarding heritage. Switzerland thanked the Secretariat for the efforts invested in developing this new reporting system and, in particular, for supporting the national focal points. As shown in the short film, the Secretariat had organized very popular online training courses. Switzerland had participated and was very satisfied that this approach allowed the emergence of regional dynamics of exchange and fruitful collaboration. Echoing the States that had carried out the exercise, the Secretariat’s document also highlighted the difficulties encountered when drawing up these reports. The complex and comprehensive nature of the online form, the substantial resources to be mobilized, and the requirement of a participatory process were some examples. It was thus essential to recognize these challenges, identify solutions and seek to constantly improve the periodic reporting system. While aware that a cycle of reports is underway, and that a structure allowing comparison should be maintained, Switzerland wished to see a substantial simplification of the wording of the questionnaires to facilitate the preparation of reports. State reports only make sense in a comparative synthesis. In this regard, it welcomed the analytical summary presented of the European and of the Latin American and Caribbean cycles. In view of the significant efforts to elaborate these reports, it was important to rationalize and simplify both the reporting and analysis mechanisms. This seemed particularly relevant in view of the MONDIACULT Declaration and the call to produce a global report on cultural policies. It was therefore advisable to consider synergies and avoid any rivalry in the reporting mechanisms.
4. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** thanked the States Parties for the timely submissions of their national reports. Having reviewed many of the reports carefully, it noted that many could serve as a model for others preparing their reports in upcoming cycles. It was the delegation’s understanding that these reports should refer mainly and only to national efforts and, in particular, avoid politicization and interference with the internal affairs of other States Parties. However, it was found that the report by Armenia did not comply with the principles and spirit of the 2003 Convention as it had referred to another State Party multiple times. As a Committee Member, this was a concern and it felt obliged to remind States Parties, including Armenia, of the Committee’s previous decision which explicitly asks States Parties “to take particular care in their periodic reports to avoid characterizing the practices and actions within other States, including expressions that might inadvertently diminish mutual respect among communities or impede intercultural dialogue” and also to work with the Secretariat in order to avoid, in their periodic reports, any language inconsistent with the United Nations Charter as well as the 2003 Convention, and invites them to meticulously pursue this principle in their future work. Any language that contradicts these principles and attempts to politicize the Convention, undermining the spirit of mutual respect and collaboration promoted by its provisions, were unacceptable. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of States Parties are sacred and unquestionable. The Committee could not allow any State Party to undermine the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, especially in this Committee.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked Uzbekistan and confirmed that its statement would be included in the summary records of the meeting.
6. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Secretariat and all concerned Members States for their extensive work on the periodic reporting. The positive outcome, so far, was manifested by the high levels of inclusive participation, new networks for cooperation, and ways to share practices and experiences, among other things. The delegation thanked the experts who had analysed the material based on which extensive data had identified common trends, challenges and opportunities. One priority area of particular importance is indigenous peoples, not least when it comes to show how climate and environmental changes can threaten their cultural heritage, but also how their knowledge and experiences can contribute to sustainable development. It was thus important that the content of these reports is used in this continuous work, both nationally and internationally. Sweden also agreed with the challenges identified by the Secretariat, noting the difficulties in understanding the comprehensive language and terminology used in the reporting documents for civil society. Lastly, it supported Switzerland’s comment on the need to simplify the questionnaire.
7. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Secretariat for its efforts deployed in this periodic reporting cycle, and for assisting and offering guidance to States Parties in times of complicated online communication as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also thanked the Secretariat for its analysis on a wide range of thematic areas covered by the reports, offering States Parties the opportunity to reflect and look broadly at the complexity of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, with a particular focus on the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The delegation had a chance to assess its own strengths but also challenges. Moreover, the periodic reporting presented the unique possibility of seeing the country’s efforts in an international context. The delegation was also thankful to Finland and Italy for launching the European Network of Focal Points, as well as to all the other States Parties for joining the network and continuing to work with great interest, enthusiasm and passion. It was hoped that the report’s outcome will help improve the strategic planning of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding at the international level, as well as at the crucial point in intersectoral cooperation within the national context. In this regard, the drafting of the periodic report helped raise awareness about the Convention in Slovakia and in various ministries. Prior to this, intangible heritage was not part of their agenda. It also brought about greater collaboration with NGOs dealing with the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, especially with the communities. The delegation was encouraged to see that States were all in the same boat, struggling with the challenges addressed in the reports, which gives hope to finding common future solutions.
8. As a new Committee Member, the delegation of **Ethiopia** expressed appreciation to the Government of Morocco for its warm welcome and marvellous hospitality. It also appreciated the Secretariat’s preparation of all the reports, and admired the way the Chairperson was steering this Committee meeting. Ethiopia extended appreciation to the forty-two States Parties in Europe that had submitted their periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of elements inscribed for the 2022 reporting cycle. As the report indicated, the implementation of the new periodic reporting was successful despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Online training and other networks are tools from which many States Parties could learn. As the new periodic reporting system completed its third year, important lessons had been learned from the experiences of Latin America and the Caribbean, and now European States Parties. However, capacity-building and resources remained problematic in many countries. Ethiopia raised the point that when it comes to Africa, special emphasis should be given to both capacity building and resources. Although the challenges and successes in implementation were reported in a generalized way in the report, the delegation sought to hear more details from the Secretariat in this regard.
9. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked colleagues from the European region for submitting inspirational reports. It also thanked the Secretariat and facilitators for the online training of focal points, other assistance offered, and the opportunity to resubmit reports by 15 February 2022. It regretted that two States Parties had failed to submit their reports and hoped that this can be done as soon as possible with the support of all. It might therefore be useful to make reference to the UNESCO intangible heritage website on periodic reporting in a letter inviting focal points to sign up. The delegation also appreciated the expert analysis from the region and the work of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. It is a great challenge for all parties to achieve a better result in core indicators and thus in the implementation of the Convention by the next cycle. It awaited the conclusion of the reflection year with great interest.
10. The delegation of **Germany** was pleased with the high participation rate in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe. It thanked the expert group from Europe for providing an initial analysis of the reports from regions 1 and 2. The delegation already looked forward to the detailed analytical report to be published in late 2023, which it hoped would provide further inspiration for a common understanding of the current challenges and sustainable solutions for the implementation of the Convention. The delegation also supported the capacity-building approach taken by the Secretariat thus far, and its efforts to strengthen the use of this reporting mechanism to produce a comprehensive global report on cultural policies every four years, as mentioned in the Final Declaration of MONDIACULT in Mexico in September 2022. However, it would also like to see a reflection on the current reporting process, which is lengthy, demanding and sometimes even redundant, and therefore not in line with the limited capacities, resources and timeframes of many States Parties, as explained in item 6.b. The delegation believed that for the second round of periodic reporting, the Secretariat could find a way to optimize the system, while respecting the Overall Results Framework.
11. The delegation of **Rwanda** thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the first cycle of periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention and on the current state of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the States Parties in Europe. It commended the European States Parties for the work carried out, with forty-two reports submitted from their region, while aware of the challenges encountered in this important task. The delegation was also aware that greater efforts had been necessary to produce these consultative reports during the COVID-19 pandemic, as was the case during the sixteenth session of the Committee at the presentation of the reports of the first cycle for Latin America and the Caribbean States. These reports provide a good example for the forthcoming first assessment of the African region. Rwanda supported the point raised by Ethiopia on the challenges with regard to resources and capacity-building for Africa in preparing these reports. A regional approach is undoubtedly a useful and effective tool to raise awareness on the importance of wider consultations and collaboration of relevant stakeholders.
12. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretary to respond to the interventions.
13. The **Secretary** noted two sets of questions. One of the questions concerned the simplification of the forms and their complexity, of which the Secretariat was well aware. Indeed, the periodic reporting form was based strictly on the Overall Results Framework, which requires a very intense amount of information. Consequently, the Secretariat intended to work out how to simplify and streamline the form, as the Overall Results Framework was elaborated with a different aim, and not necessarily with every State answering each question. On the challenges faced by Africa, the Secretariat was already working to train trainers and work with focal points. He was well aware of the need to provide enhanced capacity building for the Africa region, but the Secretariat also believed that it was an opportunity to encourage more submissions and to do more capacity building, for which the Secretariat required funding support. It was waiting to hear from several UNESCO Members in this regard. Indeed, its ability to deliver capacity building will be directly related to the funding received.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary, opening the floor to Observers.
15. The delegation of **Italy** congratulated Morocco, UNESCO and the Secretariat for the extraordinary organization and the opportunity to meet in person again after a long time. The pandemic affected people, societies, and daily and cultural life. The comprehensive and detailed analysis of the periodic reporting for the implementation of the Convention showed that the monitoring mechanism is crucial, as is the exercise to effectively contribute to a safeguarding approach at the community, national and international levels. The capacity-building activities, as set out by the Secretariat in cooperation with category 2 centres and the facilitators and focal points, serve to deepen engagement on the core work on intangible cultural heritage, particularly in strengthening community participation and institutional capacities to ensure inclusivity of youth, raising the importance of intangible cultural heritage transmission in education, and reflecting sustainability for the future. The MONDIACULT 2022 conference stated that culture is a global common good. In this framework, intangible cultural heritage is a cultural pillar for a responsible society and for sustainable development, and is thus an essential part of safeguarding plans for new generations to practice traditional knowledge, even in the case of emergency response.
16. The **Chairperson** insisted that Observers adhere to a one-minute rule for interventions.
17. The delegation of **Armenia** thanked the Secretariat for the analytical overview of the periodic reports. Armenia was pleased to submit its report in a new form in which it described all the work that had been done in the country in recent years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation conceded that its report had referred to Azerbaijan’s aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh in the autumn of 2020, with the report raising the question of the displacement of the Armenian population, the destruction of its heritage, and the serious threats to living heritage. The delegation clarified that the report only referred to cultural rites and the danger faced by them. Armenia will spare no effort in protecting the living heritage of the forcibly displaced Armenian population. Indeed, it had a moral duty and legal obligation to do so under the Convention. The delegation informed the Committee that it also had some observations concerning the report presented by Azerbaijan, which was attached to Armenia’s periodic report and was available on the Convention website. It was mostly related to another attempt to rewrite history by presenting the city of Shusha as an Azerbaijani city without a single mention of the Armenian population and their roots.
18. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Committee and the Secretariat for their efforts to implement the first cycle of periodic reporting in the European region. Unfortunately, despite the huge benefits of the reporting cycle, one State Party had used the Convention as a platform for political claims, as clearly echoed by previous speakers. Azerbaijan is deeply concerned with the content of the periodic reports submitted by Armenia. In fact, it totally rejected the false and unfounded political claims mentioned in the report by Armenia with the aim to manipulate the Committee. The report is yet another attempt to instrumentalize and politicize the Convention and undermine the spirit of mutual respect and collaboration. This approach paves the way for an extremely dangerous precedent that could lead to discrediting the Committee. These unfounded and totally false claims in a national report come from a country which held internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan under occupation for nearly thirty years. During the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan, cultural heritage was totally destroyed. Numerous examples of traditional arts, crafts, social activities and ritual practices were completely annihilated or are now in danger, as the communities that survived fled to other regions of the country having no connection with the historical or cultural environment for thirty years. Armenia must stop its politicization of the Convention and focus on its own territory, as required by the Convention.
19. The **Chairperson** thanked the Observers and turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.b**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.b) **adopted.**
20. The **Chairperson** thanked the Committee Members, informing the Bureau of its meeting the following day, which was also open to Observers.
21. The **Secretary** reminded Committee Members to send amendments to specific draft decisions concerning nominations by email to the designated address to allow the Bureau to better organize the time available for debating these items, as well as the submission of any audiovisual material to be projected, if planned.
22. The **Chairperson** announced that all Members of the Committee had been invited by Her Majesty Princess Lalla Hasnaa to an audience. The day’s session was adjourned.

*[Tuesday, 29 November, morning session]*

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates to the second day of the meeting, recalling that the Committee had successfully concluded agenda items 1 to 6.b. The Bureau had met in the morning for the first time to discuss several issues, namely, the revision of the timetable of the Committee’s work. The revised timetable was published on the dedicated 17.COM website. The day’s session would start with the examination of item 6.c, followed by item 6.d and item 7. The afternoon session would proceed with item 7.a and item 7.b, Taking into consideration the heavy agenda, Members were asked to be brief and concise in their interventions. The Chairperson remarked that the Kenyan delegation had wished to speak under item 6.a to present Kenya’s experience on the element inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, ‘Traditions and practices associated with the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda’, and was given the floor to share its experience.
2. The delegation of **Kenya** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, expressing gratitude and appreciation for the hospitality shown by the people of Morocco. It thanked the Secretariat for its support, advice and guidance, particularly when Kenya had to meet its obligations as a State Party. With reference to the traditions and practices associated with the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda, the delegation reported that in consultation with the practitioners of this element, it had revised the safeguarding plan and measures in place to realign them to the needs and abilities of the practitioners and bearers of this element. The State Party had evaluated the experiences of the previous plans and measures to put in place more effective mechanisms that will enhance the safeguarding of this element. Among them were planned community-based inventorying and periodic writing, as well as capacity-building workshops with the practitioners and other stakeholders who have been working with the community. The State Party included in its budgetary projections some financial support to enable the procurement of basic equipment for use in the documentation of rituals and activities associated with the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda so that the community can be central to the management of the documentation and inventorying of its intangible cultural heritage. These efforts had been deployed to ensure the establishment of a specific website for the element which is managed by the practitioners. This initiative is being rolled out to other communities, including those that do not have an element inscribed on the UNESCO Lists of intangible cultural heritage. Kenya is committed to recognizing these living treasures from this community and other communities by nominating them as national heroes and heroines in a special category of persons and groups who have made tremendous contributions to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Kenyan communities during the annual Mashujaa or Heroes’ Day celebrations.

**ITEM 6.c OF THE AGENDA:**

**UPDATE ON THE FIRST 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 LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (2021 CYCLE), IN THE ARAB STATES (2023 CYCLE) AND IN AFRICA (2024 CYCLE)**

**Documents:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/6.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-6.c-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/17.COM/INF.6.c Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.6.c_Rev-EN.pdf)*.*

**Decision:** [*17.COM 6.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.c)

1. The **Chairperson** thanked Kenya for sharingits inspiring experience. He then turned to agenda item 6.c and the update on the first cycle of periodic reports 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 of States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (2021 cycle), Arab States (2023 cycle) and Africa (2024 cycle)’.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that the periodic reporting reform was aligned to the Overall Results Framework of the Convention, for which a new submission calendar of reports was established by the Committee at its thirteenth session and now formed the basis of the regional rotation. According to this new calendar, Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to implement the reformed exercise in 2021, which was followed by States Parties in Europe submitting their reports for examination by the Committee at the present session under the 2022 cycle. The next regions will be the Arab States, Africa and, lastly, Asia and the Pacific under the 2023, 2024 and 2025 cycles, respectively. Periodic reporting is a four-phased process that takes place over a period of four years. This exercise was thus implemented in four regions at the same time but at a different phase for each region. For Latin America and the Caribbean, at its sixteenth session in 2021, the Committee examined the reports submitted by States Parties in the region, as well as an analytical overview summarizing the main findings from these reports. However, the Secretariat continued the analysis with the research team that was established to prepare a full and complete analysis of the periodic reports from Latin America and the Caribbean, which was now presented as an [INF document](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-INF.6.c_Rev-EN.pdf) to the present Committee. As recalled under item 5, the Secretariat had also prepared a layout version of this report, which was hoped to be attractive and easy to read. This version of the report is the full analysis of the overview summary that was undertaken in 2021 and was now presented to this session of the Committee as a revised document 6.c. The Secretary did not elaborate on the periodic reporting exercise in Europe, as their reports and analytical overview had already been examined under item 6.b.
3. Concerning the Arab States, the **Secretary** explained that the Secretariat had worked hard in 2022 under the 2023 cycle thanks to a targeted capacity-building approach. Country focal points received training sessions in a great collaboration with the Sharjah Institute for Heritage. These States were expected to submit their reports online by 15 December 2022. For Africa, the periodic reporting exercise had just been launched, that is, the capacity building for the periodic reporting under the 2024 cycle. The Secretariat had started the preparations for this capacity building planned by UNESCO, and it had received a generous offer to work with the category 2 centre CRESPIAF[[20]](#footnote-21) in Algiers. States Parties were reminded that the Secretariat was looking for funding and support to undertake a full capacity-building roll-out in Africa in 2023, which would be a perfect year as it would bring all the countries under periodic reporting together to go over such issues as nominations and trainings.
4. The **Secretary** concluded the presentation with a few comments as a way forward. While it is a challenge to support four regions undertaking the periodic reporting exercise, the Secretariat was learning new lessons from the periodic reporting that it was able to apply from one region to the next. The working documents included some of these key recommendations, particularly from the experience gleaned in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Secretariat was aware of the need to improve and refine the system. There were questions regarding the form that needs to be streamlined. The Secretariat was also aware that there are over 100 questions, some requesting similar information. The Secretariat would also tackle the technical questions as quickly as possible. At the same time, any structural solutions will need to be considered carefully, as the work is carried out in the reflection year, following the full cycle. Finally, it was important to recall that the outcome paper of MONDIACULT called upon UNESCO to produce a comprehensive global report on cultural policies on a quadrennial basis. It will therefore be very important for the 2003 Convention to start exploring and understanding how best it might adjust the process to make sure it is aligned with this overall comprehensive global reporting culture so that the periodic reporting exercise in this Convention can effectively contribute to that overall report.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary and congratulated all the States Parties and other stakeholders involved in this participatory exercise, which is fundamental for the monitoring and implementation of the Convention. He thanked the Secretariat for its continued support, which had contributed to these results. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.
6. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the Secretariat for its report and its support. It was very pleased that the Latin America and Caribbean region had a very high submission rate despite the adverse circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation highlighted the supporting role played by CRESPIAL,[[21]](#footnote-22) adding that it was really important to continue to support the work of this centre.
7. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Latin American and the Caribbean countries that had the difficult task of testing the new form of the reporting mechanism, and for the shared lessons learned that it had the chance to discuss with representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean countries during the online course on periodic reporting organized by the Secretariat in 2021. The results of the analysis and the content of the corresponding report were inspirational. The reporting countries offered many examples of investment in institutions, education, awareness-raising, and the development of policy frameworks for safeguarding, particularly with respect to tangible heritage management, intellectual property, and much more. Although an important part is dedicated to the reporting of the elements inscribed on the Representative List, the mentioned examples show that the Representative List is just one of the tools for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, especially concerning the discussion on Article 18 initiated by Sweden, which it very much welcomed. The delegation looked forward to the overall analysis of all the cycles when States Parties will have completed their periodic reports so as to see the development of the Convention, as well as the mosaic of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding practices that will be created by all the countries together.
8. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat and asked for information on the ongoing phases of the cycles in the regions whose States Parties had not submitted their periodic reports since the last session. It also thanked the Secretariat for its key recommendations, adding that it appreciated the work of the team, which had successfully prepared the analysis of the periodic reports from Latin America and the Caribbean countries. The delegation congratulated the States Parties for the fruitful reformed first cycle. It was satisfied that the Africa 2023 cycle had already begun, and it wondered whether, together with the first three reporting regions, they could share their experiences and support stakeholders in the Africa region so that this demanding exercise could be finished effectively and on time for as many States Parties as possible. The delegation wished the Arab region a successful final work on the timely submission of their reports and an even higher rate of submission than Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.
9. The **Secretary** thanked all the Committee Members for their comments. Czechia had a wonderful comment on engaging in the upcoming cycles of periodic reporting so as to build on lessons learned. In fact, as mentioned by Slovakia, the Secretariat did organize a brief exchange between some focal points from the Latin America and the Caribbean region (the first reporting region) and Europe so that they could pass on their experiences. Hopefully, the same can be done with Europe and the Arab States, thereby accumulating knowledge. The new reporting system had seen very positive results and lessons were being learnt. Indeed, sharing experiences and lessons learned from one region to another is an extremely positive approach. Thus, any offers to accumulate and share lessons learned were extremely welcome and would be accommodated. The Secretary reiterated his appeal for financial support in order to run the capacity-building workshops.
10. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary and turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.c**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.c) **adopted**.

**ITEM 6.d OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES ON THE USE OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/6.d*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-6.d-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 6.d*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.d)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to sub-item 6.d and the reports of States Parties on the use of International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, an important means to take stock of the implementation of the Convention on the ground.
2. The **Secretary** explained thatArticle 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”. This document covers the reports submitted by States Parties during the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, and presents an overview of the implementation of the International Assistance mechanism. Under the reporting period, 42 projects in 34 States Parties had received International Assistance, for a total of US$ 4.9 million. At this session, nine final reports and 14 progress reports submitted were presented (see Annex I of document 6.d, page 11). The other 19 projects, for which reports were forthcoming, were listed in Annex II (page 13).
3. Ms Leila Maziz of the **Secretariat** presented the reports, sharing some general observations and interesting trends regarding the scope of actions of International Assistance projects that were currently being implemented. During the sixteenth session of the Committee, a decrease in the number of International Assistance requests submitted by States Parties was observed, with 21 projects processed in two years, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat had since observed a recovery in the number of requests submitted, with 20 requests processed between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. The geographical deployment of the International Assistance mechanism saw 34 beneficiary States Parties, of which 9 were SIDS and 17 were States in the Africa region. The increasingly important part taken by the latter responds to UNESCO’s Global Priority for Africa, as 43 per cent of the projects in progress benefitted the Africa region and Electoral Group V(a) (see figure 2, page 5 of the working document). During the reporting period, this represented an amount of US$2.1 million. The International Assistance mechanism therefore continues to expand by supporting a wide range of projects in the areas of safeguarding, such as awareness-raising, inventorying, revitalization, transmission and capacity building. Capacity building remained the main objective of International Assistance projects, with more than 50 per cent of ongoing projects. These projects contribute to community capacity building and the development of community inventories with the participation of these same communities. Importantly, many of these projects had taken advantage of the training materials developed as part of the capacity-building programme. They also benefited from experts of the global network of facilitators. Projects dedicated to the safeguarding of living heritage, as well as those focusing on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, were also increasing in number. As for projects devoted to the inclusion of living heritage in formal and non-formal education, they contribute to the development of teaching aids specialized in intangible cultural heritage, or even to the setting up of training courses for teaching staff.
4. **Ms Leila Maziz** then presented the many efforts made during 2022 to intensify the implementation of the International Assistance mechanism. First, it was recalled that, from its establishment in 2008 until 30 June 2022, 59 States Parties had benefited from financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for a total amount of US$9.4 million. This represented no less than 116 projects funded to date. More than half of the applications were approved (54 per cent), benefitting the States of Electoral Group V(a) in the Africa region and representing US$5.05 million, more than the half of the total amount of funds granted. Furthermore, an important step was taken in that the first multinational International Assistance request was submitted by the States Parties of Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. This project, entitled ‘Capacity building of community leaders and public managers to safeguard the living heritage of Afro-descendant communities in the SICA region and Cuba’, was approved by the Bureau in October 2022. This project will further strengthen regional cooperation for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The global reflection on the listing mechanisms had led to a broadening of the modalities of the International Assistance mechanism, resulting in renewed support available to States Parties such as: (a) preparatory assistance for the elaboration of requests for the transfer of an element from one List to another; (b) preparatory assistance for the elaboration of requests of nomination files on an extended or reduced basis for elements already inscribed; (c) international assistance to request the transfer of an element from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List; and (d) the possibility for States Parties to submit a request for International Assistance up to US$100,000 at any time during the year for examination by the Bureau of the Committee. States Parties were thus invited to take advantage of these new opportunities. It was recalled that the Secretariat is continuing its actions to promote the International Assistance mechanism through the development of communication tools such as the ‘Toolkit for requesting International Assistance’.[[22]](#footnote-23) In parallel, a ‘Strategy for the monitoring, evaluation and identification of lessons learned for International Assistance projects’ will be presented at the present session of the Committee under item 11.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat and opened the floor for comments.
6. The delegation of **Ethiopia** appreciated that Electoral Group V(a) had benefited from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund through UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa. It also appreciated the draft decision in which States Parties from Electoral Group V(a) were said to still be the main beneficiaries of International Assistance in accordance with Global Priority Africa. Moreover, it welcomed the increasing number of requests submitted by SIDS, and it fully supported the report.
7. The delegation of **Peru** extended its thanks to the Secretariat for the provision of funds for the multinational request for the Central American Integration System group (SICA). It took the opportunity to announce that this was a big step forward for CRESPIAL, which would, for the first time, receive direct funding for a multinational project such as this in the Latin America and Caribbean region. This was significant and set a vital precedent, and the delegation encouraged all Members and Observers to attend a side event that would be held the following day, which would be the occasion to present an overview of this multinational project which is of great interest to the region.
8. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** explained that it had benefited from International Assistance during the 2020–2022 period for the capacity building of actors involved in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The first phase was successfully executed and led to the selection of twelve national facilitators. The resumption of the second phase will consist of training 225 local actors by the 12 selected national facilitators. The delegation was delighted that professionals in the field of intangible cultural heritage had been selected to join this global network of facilitators. It took this opportunity to express gratitude to the Committee for approving its request for international assistance, and to the donor countries which, through their contributions, had made this capacity building possible. The delegation urged States Parties to continue their support and, in particular, their support of the Africa region.
9. The delegation of **India** thanked Morocco for its extraordinary hospitality and efficiency in holding this session in Rabat. India supported the draft decision and was happy with the International Assistance that had been granted, as well as with the report submitted by the Secretariat. Articles 23 and 24 of the Convention are very important for countries that face such issues that require International Assistance. It was evident that the international community, especially UNESCO, would take that step forward to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage in those countries. India is particularly pleased with the capacity-building allocations given to Group V(a), the African States. India was also supportive of the steps taken to grant assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean States. It looked forward to discussions under item 12 [on the ICH Fund] and hoped that the ‘Toolkit for requesting International Assistance’ is more readily available online, which would facilitate access to countries and States Parties. India stood ready to partner with Latin American and Caribbean States, and Africa. It had also established the Indian Institute of Heritage, an avant-garde institute near New Delhi, which will prepare the next generation of preservationists, conservationists, museologists and people dealing with cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.
10. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Secretariat for its report and presentation, and for its hard work. It thanked the Secretariat for the information on the different possibilities to request International Assistance for various forms of safeguarding work, for example, preparing nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List as well as proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It believed that it would be a good idea to provide the same opportunity for other nominations. Article 20(d) in the Operational Directives of the Convention states that International Assistance can serve “any other purpose the Committee may deem necessary”. *Would it therefore be possible for the Committee to include the preparation of nominations to the Representative List for States with no elements previously inscribed?*
11. The delegation of **Malaysia** appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat in continuing its actions to promote the International Assistance mechanism, notably, by providing technical support to States Parties. The development of the ‘Toolkit for requesting International Assistance’ had benefitted States Parties and other stakeholders to promote the objective of International Assistance, and the modalities and procedures for submitting a request to the Fund. The special session held in March 2022 for the Asia Pacific region greatly benefitted Malaysia, among others in the region. Over the past few years, there had been a significant reduction in the number of requests approved by the Bureau compared to the applications received. Nevertheless, Malaysia sought clarification regarding the reasons for the large number of rejections of submissions in 2018.
12. The delegation of **Botswana** was delighted by the significant and growing number of approved International Assistance requests during the reporting period. It took note that requests from Africa constituted 43 per cent of the approved projects, which is in accordance with UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa. Botswana congratulated the States Parties that had been granted International Assistance for the first time. However, it noted with concern that no requests were submitted by States Parties to develop nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, and that for two consecutive years no requests were received for preparatory assistance. Botswana informed the Committee that it had submitted a request from the Fund for the implementation of the safeguarding plan for Seperu folkdance and associated practices.
13. The **Secretary** noted a question from Sweden regarding the possibility of funding preparatory assistance for nomination files to the Representative List for States not having any element inscribed, as well as a question from Malaysia concerning the 2018 cycle. The Secretary also thanked Botswana for raising the issue that no requests had been received in the last two years for either preparatory assistance for the Urgent Safeguarding List or for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. He also ensured India that the Secretariat would find a more easily accessible way to locate the Toolkit on the Convention website. In fact, the website had just been revamped so it will be made a little more accessible. Indeed, the question posed by Sweden is interesting and pertinent, and would take into consideration the ‘unsuccessful’ granting of available funding that already exists for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and the Urgent Safeguarding List. However, the Secretariat was not necessarily limited by the text of the Convention but rather by the Operational Directives, which outline the forms of preparatory assistance that can be granted under paragraph 21. Indeed, they had just been expanded within the framework of the open-ended reflection, as initially assistance was only granted for nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and proposals to the Good Safeguarding Practices. Preparatory assistance can now be requested for the transfer of an element from one List to another and for extending or reducing multinational elements. However, there is no provision for nominations to the Representative List. This did not mean that it was not possible, just that the Committee would need to forward its request to the General Assembly with a proposal to include assistance for nominations to the Representative List should the Committee believe it noteworthy, that is, for countries that have no elements inscribed. It was indeed a good idea to have a preparatory assistance mechanism to assist States Parties in their first inscription and to provide some capacity building to enable them to do so.
14. The **Secretary** called upon States that may be interested in proposing elements to the Urgent Safeguarding List or practices to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices to request the assistance available for this purpose [and underutilized], as mentioned by Botswana. Responding to the point raised by Malaysia, the Secretary noted that the table (figure 1, page 4 of the working document) did indeed reveal a large backlog of projects in 2017 and 2018. At that time, a special dedicated team for the International Assistance mechanism was established and it was at that stage that the Secretariat intensified efforts to catch up on the backlog and remedy the situation. As a result, the mechanism was running more smoothly, precisely because of the reforms undertaken. Nevertheless, reforms always take a couple of years once introduced before they make their way through the system.
15. The **Chairperson** hoped that the answers provided had been satisfactory, inviting the Observers to comment.
16. On behalf of the Ambassador, the delegation of **Senegal** expressed his regret that he was unable to attend, but having in mind the memory of Mr Abdoul Aziz Guissé, former Director of Heritage of Senegal, who passed away in 2022. He had worked for fifteen years with the Committee and participated in many of its activities. In 2015 he submitted a file for International Assistance that enabled Senegal to conduct an inventory of intangible cultural heritage which today has fifty-nine elements inscribed. This was very important, as Senegal had seven World Heritage sites but was still struggling to finalize work on its intangible cultural heritage. Today, the delegation honoured Mr Abdoul Aziz Guissé’s memory for the work he accomplished. The delegation thanked the organizers of this session, underlining the quality of the documentation. It also made a plea for International Assistance to help promote interculturality through transnational initiatives. The delegation mentioned the experience of the 1972 Convention, with Senegal and The Gambia, which had carried out work on megaliths. These are interesting initiatives because interculturality, whether through the 2005 Convention or the 2003 Convention, is clearly a factor for promoting peace between countries. It was thus a duty to support such initiatives.
17. The **Chairperson** thanked Senegal and, on behalf of all the Members of the Committee, offered condolences and heartfelt sympathy.
18. The delegation of **The** **Gambia** expressed appreciation as one of the countries that had benefitted from international support. The Gambia was currently implementing a capacity-building project to strengthen national capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and its contribution to sustainable development. It was important to note that the capacity building was also supported by facilitators from Zambia and Uganda. This capacity building had contributed to raising awareness of intangible cultural heritage and helped the country gain knowledge of the Convention. The delegation commended colleagues from Senegal for mentioning the collaboration between the two countries. It concluded by congratulating Morocco for hosting this session and making this stay a memorable one.
19. The **Chairperson** thanked The Gambia for the kind words and for its presence in Morocco, as for all the delegates.
20. The delegation of **Japan** congratulated the Chairperson on his chairing of the session. The Ambassador, H.E. Mr Atsuyuki Oike, noted that his name had been mentioned earlier in connection with the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and he therefore wished to thank his colleagues. Some of the achievements in this regard involved setting up a simplified process for International Assistance, as well as establishing a process for the transfer of an element between the Lists, particularly from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. It was hoped that Member States could make use of these new processes. However, the reform of intangible heritage did not stop here. He commended the Swedish Government for taking initiative on Article 18 and related discussions. On the question of International Assistance, Japan had supported a project for safeguarding living heritage in emergencies in five SIDS: the Bahamas, Belize, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. Climate change and other natural disasters could destroy communities exercising their living heritage, and these communities need support. After all, the most important factor in intangible heritage is to help and encourage communities to preserve their heritage. It was hoped that the communities concerned will be the main focus of the discussions in this Committee.
21. The **Chairperson** paid tribute to H.E. Ambassador Oike on behalf of all the Members of the Committee and the States Parties, thanking him for his marvellous work on the listing mechanisms and for his commitment and wisdom, for which they will be forever grateful.
22. The delegation of **Namibia** congratulated the Chairperson on his excellent leadership, commending the Government of Morocco for its warm and generous hospitality. Namibia is also pleased that capacity building remains a priority for the Africa region. It was indeed grateful to UNESCO for the financial support received, in particular, for the Safeguarding of the Okuruuo practices of the bearer communities, which enabled significant progress and strengthened capacities for the implementation of the Convention at national and community levels across the different geographic regions in Namibia. Indeed, Namibia was thankful for the unwavering support it continues to receive from the Secretariat. Despite major setbacks imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it reaffirmed the Namibian Government’s commitment to the successful and impactful implementation of the Okuruuo project, while promoting the spirit and values of the Convention.
23. The **Chairperson** was happy that, in line with the Global Africa priority, more and more African countries were benefiting from International Assistance.
24. The delegation of **Guinea** thanked UNESCO for all the efforts made within the framework of the implementation of the Convention at the national level, which Guinea ratified in 2008. In 2017, thanks to the support of the UNESCO Regional Office in Abuja, Guinea received assistance that enabled it to assess the needs of groups and communities throughout the national territory. At the end of these regional consultations, it realized that the elements of Guinean intangible cultural heritage were dangerously threatened due to anthropogenic and natural factors, and even the influence of monotheistic religions. To counter these threats, Guinea developed a project entitled ‘Participatory inventory and promotion of instrumental ensembles of traditional music in Guinea’, as these instrumental ensembles of traditional music still perpetuate the artistic practices of the medieval Mandinka through songs, dances and rites, including the instruments associated with them. It therefore submitted a request for financial assistance in the amount of US$100,000, which was accepted subject to certain observations. This financial assistance was requested to safeguard the fragile elements of national intangible cultural heritage.
25. The **Chairperson** remarked that Guinea’s call had been heard by the Committee.
26. The delegation of **Nigeria** thanked the Chairperson for the manner in which he was steering the work of the Committee, thanking Morocco for the excellent hosting and hospitality. Nigeria particularly thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive report. It noted with particular interest that 43 per cent of active projects benefitted States from Electoral Group V(a) (Africa), representing US$2.1 million of assistance granted, in line with UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa. This trend was encouraging, especially in seeing that the newly approved operational strategy for Priority Africa and the flagship programme on cultural heritage and capacity development and culture is well implemented. Nigeria had benefitted from capacity-building assistance in the past within the scope of International Assistance. The delegation recalled the project and support for the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Nigeria, which was carried out from 2014 to 2017. It therefore supported the draft decision.
27. The delegation of **Seychelles** thanked the Chairperson, the Committee and the Secretariat for this wonderful organization, congratulating Morocco for its hospitality and warm welcome. The Seychelles thanked UNESCO for the assistance provided to the country for the inscription of ‘Moutya’ on the Representative List, a first for the Seychelles.
28. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** turned to adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 6.d**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/6.d) **adopted**.
29. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to the countries having benefitted from International Assistance and completed their projects to share their experience.
30. The delegation of **Cambodia** expressed thanks and congratulations to the Government of Morocco for the organization of this session and for the warm welcome in this beautiful city of Rabat. It expressed gratitude to the Committee, which approved International Assistance for the safeguarding plan for Chapei Dang Veng. The role and responsibilities of the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat are essential and were carried out with professionalism that ensured a bright future regarding the preservation of its intangible cultural heritage for future generations. The delegation invited the Director-General of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia to present a summary of the experience and current situation of Chapei Dang Veng.
31. The delegation of **Cambodia** [second speaker], represented by Mr Siyonn Sophearith, Director-General of Cultural Technics of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia, summarized the current situation of Chapei Dang Veng. Chapei Dang Veng is a long-necked lute which is played mostly accompanied by melodious singing. In the past, this musical tradition was very popular in Cambodian society. However, before its inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2016, the practice was on the verge of disappearing. Thanks to its inscription and International Assistance for the implementation of the safeguarding plan, covering the period from November 2017 to November 2021, today, Chapei Dang Veng clearly does not present the need for urgent safeguarding. Young people are more active and interested in learning and preserving the Chapei, while the general public has now discovered the Chapei performance. While preserving values and traditions, efforts to highlight and integrate the Chapei in other forms of performances have resulted in tremendous popularity. The music video *Time to Rise* is an example in which Chapei Master Kong Nay, one of the surviving masters from the Khmer Rouge regime, plays alongside the famous rapper VannDa, with 1.3 million views on YouTube worldwide. This music video not only raises awareness and visibility of Chapei, it also promotes creativity in the music video industry in Cambodia. Efforts are now placed on continuing to preserve the viability and continuity of this magnificent musical tradition, with a wish to transfer it to the Representative List. The Ministry will continue to support and work closely with practitioners, communities and other relevant stakeholders, both private and public, to create an enabling environment for Chapei to thrive.
32. The **Chairperson** thanked Cambodia and welcomed the Minister to Morocco.
33. The delegation of **Mauritania** expressed thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality. The video presented spoke of the nation’s collective memory, shedding light on the customs, traditions and cultural diversity in Mauritania, with its languages, nationalities and ancient cultural traditions. Mauritania serves as a bridge between Africa and the Arab Maghreb and their cultural relations. In this region without borders, there are many cultures, relations and dialogues of civilizations and cultural encounters. This was therefore an image of Mauritania, with this cultural diversity, and which still retains the heritage of Africa and the Arab worlds. The delegation was happy to add to this collective memory of intangible heritage.
34. The **Chairperson** thanked and congratulated Mauritania. A point of order was called by India.
35. The delegation of **India** asked the Chairperson to clarify the sequence of agenda items.
36. The **Chairperson** explained that the Committee was still at item 6.d.
37. The **Secretary** explained that decision 6.d had been adopted but it was customary in this Committee to allow States to discuss the results of completed projects that had benefitted from International Assistance.
38. The delegation of **India** explained that the Committee would have been better prepared to appreciate the presentations if it had been presented with a list of the countries making presentations.
39. The **Secretary** clarified that Annex I of the report (page 11) listed the countries (highlighted in blue) that had submitted their final reports and for which the projects had ended.
40. The delegation of **Mongolia** presented the two projects that were implemented between 2000 and 2022 thanks to International Assistance for enhancing the viability of two intangible cultural heritage elements: (a) Folk long song performance technique of Limbe performances – circular breathing; and (b) Mongolian traditional practices of worshipping the sacred sites, which were inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2011 and 2017, respectively. When Mongolia nominated these two elements, there were very few practitioners and the percentage of the repertoire utilizing the traditional method among professional musicians was decreasing rapidly. The number of masters, who were knowledgeable enough to properly conduct the traditional worship rituals and ceremonies, had also dramatically decreased due to their ban in the twentieth century, with only 20 per cent of the 1,000 traditional worshippers of sacred sites. Within recent years, the Government of Mongolia has paid attention to enhancing the viability of these heritage elements by modifying legal and normative laws, and supporting practitioners, communities and stakeholders who are actively participating in the safeguarding of these elements and promoting the significance of the heritage elements to the public. With the implementation of this project, Mongolia benefitted from enhancing the viability of these two elements. For the project, Folk long song performance technique of Limbe performances – circular breathing, implemented by the National Center for Cultural Heritage and the Mongolian Association for Limbe Performers, field work was conducted, a database was created, and a temporary office for apprenticeship training was funded in seven places (apprenticeship training was conducted for ten practitioners). In addition, capacity-building and awareness-raising measures and a research conference were organized. As a result, the distribution of circular breathing extended from 8 places in 2014 to 14 places today, and the trained number of practitioners of circular breathing increased to over 160.
41. The delegation of **Mongolia** presented the second project, ‘Supporting natural and cultural sustainability through the revitalization and transmission of the traditional practices of worshiping the sacred sites in Mongolia’. This project was implemented by an accredited NGO in Mongolia, the Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage, with support from the National Center for Cultural Heritage and other state and local cultural organizations. This resulted in a two-year nationwide nature and culture journey under the motto ‘Let’s Appreciate and Respect the Sacred Homeland and our Heritage’ between 2018 and 2020. This journey was also organized within the framework of the collaborative campaign by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). As a result of this project, more than 800 local communities were actively involved. Under field research, the Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage (FPNCH) and the National Center for Cultural Heritage established a national inventory and information database of sacred sites in Mongolia. The national contest for best practices to revive and promote worship practices was held among the communities from October 2019 to June 2021. The national contest attracted the general public and local communities and concluded in October 2021. More than 100 local communities successfully participated in the contest and 21 of them were selected and awarded with certificates of honour and cultural rights. In conclusion, the viability of these two elements have enhanced the number of practitioners and increased the active involvement of communities, individuals and stakeholders in the safeguarding activities. These projects have improved cohesion between communities and non-governmental and governmental organizations, as well as the capacity building of stakeholders and the transmission of this heritage to youth. The delegation highlighted the support of the Ministry of Culture of Mongolia in the implementation of this project, and further discussion and research had already begun in Mongolia to transfer these elements from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. The delegation expressed its great appreciation to the practitioners, communities and bearers who played an active role in these two projects. Mongolia also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Evaluation Body, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and the Secretariat for their decisions that enhanced the viability of these two elements of heritage in Mongolia.
42. The **Chairperson** thanked Mongolia for the very interesting presentation.
43. The delegation of **Zambia** thanked the Chairperson for his chairing of this meeting, the Secretariat for its work and for enabling delegations to attend, and Morocco for its goodwill and for hosting the delegations. One of the major projects that received funding from UNESCO was for the degree programme in intangible cultural heritage at the University of Zambia. The aim was to strengthen capacity for the safeguarding and management of intangible cultural heritage in Zambia. The project had three objectives: (a) to provide a critical mass of experts for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Zambia; (b) to improve the level of training of administrators and experts working in the field of intangible cultural heritage to a degree level; and (c) to provide a niche for critical research and in-depth understanding in this field. The project was approved in 2017 for the amount of US$334,820. Project implementation ran from 2018 to 2021. Student sponsorship for their fourth year of study in the programme under this project was to be undertaken by the Government of Zambia up to the end of the programme, which was finalized in November 2022. The project was supposed to enrol twenty students, but sixteen students were enrolled on the programme. Fifteen students were expected to graduate, as they had completed their final exams. However, one of the students unfortunately passed away. The students were mainly from the Department of Culture and Traditional Affairs from national museums and from the community.
44. The delegation of **Zambia** reported that the project was able to support two PhD students who were still working on their research. At the beginning of the programme, academicians, lecturers and other stakeholders were trained on the provisions of the 2003 Convention. The training at this stage was to prepare for the implementation and management of the intangible cultural heritage degree programme. Two students carried out projects in communities that have a direct safeguarding approach, such as awareness raising, documenting and inventorying, among others. Some of the original student projects had been adopted by communities for continued implementation. Alongside the mainstream training programmes was the ongoing short-term training and community-based inventorying of undergraduate students from the University of Zambia, and other universities and learning institutions, such as Zambia News and Information Services, the National Museums Board, National Heritage, and other stakeholders. The programme that started with the support of UNESCO will continue to be run by the University of Zambia and has become a permanent programme.
45. The delegation of **Zimbabwe** thanked Morocco for its hospitality and congratulated the Chairperson on the colourful official opening ceremony. It also congratulated the Chairperson and the Secretariat for the good work and for the report presented. As a recipient of International Assistance, Zimbabwe was very grateful for this invaluable support. Its most recent projects included: (a) ‘Enhancing the capacity of communities to safeguard traditional dance expressions as performing arts heritage in western Zimbabwe’, conducted by the NGO Nhimbe Trust; and (b) ‘Inventorying oral traditions, expressions and local knowledge and practices of the Korekore of Hurungwe District in Zimbabwe’, conducted by the Chinhoyi University of Technology. The funding of these projects had successfully raised awareness of the 2003 Convention among community members and across Zimbabwe, with a huge impact that includes, among others, increasing the capacity of local communities to valorize their intangible cultural heritage in a world that is increasingly monocultural. The inclusion of inventoried elements from the various communities of Zimbabwe on the national inventory list will help draw nominations for listing with UNESCO, and has increased capacity and empowered local communities through the training of trainers, women, youth, traditional leaders and governmental officials on community-based inventorying, which is now cascading to more community members. There has been an acceptance of documenting elements and transmitting intangible cultural heritage through digital means for the communities’ sake and for posterity. Zimbabwe has also been able to create a sense of dialogue and peaceful coexistence among communities as they appreciate their intangible cultural heritage and sustainably transmit and safeguard it. Forums for discussion and exchange of information on community-based intangible cultural heritage inventorying processes and best practices have been revived. Zimbabwe also empowered communities to apply for International Assistance for their community-based inventorying activities within their districts and continued to raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage in Zimbabwe’s communities, which has resulted in a national policy of celebrating the country’s living cultural heritage for the whole month of May, as inaugurated by the Government in 2022. Zimbabwe thanked UNESCO for the intangible cultural heritage funding.

*[Video projection of the element]*

1. The **Chairperson** thanked the States Parties for sharing their experiences.

**ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2022**

**Documents:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/7*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7-EN.docx)

[*Order of files Rev.3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/17COM_Order_of_files_Rev.3_EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 7*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7)

1. The **Chairperson** turned toagenda item 7, which was eagerly awaited by everyone. He appealed to the Committee’s constructive spirit and open-mindedness, welcoming the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body, Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo from Italy, the Vice-Chair, Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam from Egypt, and the Rapporteur, Mr Kirk Siang Yeo from Singapore, who all joined the podium.
2. The **Secretary** explained that the Evaluation Body for the 2022 cycle was established by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021. The Body was tasked with evaluating the nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List that are examined under item 7.a. The 2022 cycle included one nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List combined with an International Assistance request. The Evaluation Body was also tasked with evaluating nominations to the Representative List examined under item 7.b, as well as proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices under item 7.c. In 2022, there was one request for International Assistance greater than US$100,000, under item 7.d. As with previous years, the Evaluation Body was tasked with evaluating a high number of files, fifty-six files in total. The Secretariat commended the members of the Body for their efforts and dedication. He informed the Committee that two files had been withdrawn by the submitting States: from Grenada, ‘Shakespeare Mas, a traditional component of Carnival unique to Carriacou’ [17.COM 7.b.12]; and from Belgium and France, ‘Living fairground culture and showmen’s art’ [17.COM 7.b.46]. Thus, the Committee would examine a total of fifty-four files.
3. The **Secretary** outlined how item 7 and its subitems would be organized to facilitate the smooth conduct of the debates. First of all, Mr Kirk Siang Yeo, the Rapporteur, will present a brief oral report on the work of the 2022 Evaluation Body and the key crosscutting issues identified by the Body during this cycle. Following the oral report, the floor would be opened for specific questions that Committee Members may wish to address to the Evaluation Body, with interventions restricted to questions to the Evaluation Body concerning issues addressed in the overall report. This is because the adoption of the overall decision on item 7 will be suspended until *after* the examination of all the individual nomination files. The Committee would then proceed with evaluating all the files individually as per Decision [16.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/16) taken in 2021. Nominations will be examined in English alphabetical order, starting with the files of States beginning with the letter ‘C’ under each mechanism. A tentative schedule (order of files) with estimated times slots was made available, but was subject to change. All amendments for the discussion of individual files were asked to be sent to the dedicated email address. The general debate would take place after the evaluations of all individual files, followed by the adoption of the overall decision.
4. The **Chairperson** presented the working method for the organization of the debate in terms of time management and amendments, which were covered in the circular message sent on 4 November to the States Parties. The provisional timetable, as approved by the Bureau on 4 October 2022, set out five sessions or about fifteen hours for nomination-related items (or sixteen minutes per file). Following standard practice, all decisions under item 7 and its sub-items would be adopted without debate, unless a Committee Member raised a particular point. In principle, the Committee would adopt as a whole any draft decisions for which no amendments or requests for debate had been received. With regard to draft decisions for which amendments were submitted, however, the Committee would adopt them paragraph by paragraph. The Secretariat had received amendments for the following nominations: on behalf of the GRULAC group, Panama had requested to open a debate for the nomination ‘Knowledge of the light rum masters’ submitted by Cuba, and the ‘Holy Week in Guatemala’ submitted by Guatemala. Brazil submitted an amendment for the overall decision on item 7, ‘Report of the Evaluation Body on its work in 2022’ (draft decision 17.COM 7), which was supported by Angola, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Rwanda. Brazil submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Knowledge of the light rum masters’ by Cuba for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.5), which was supported by Angola, Ethiopia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda and Viet Nam. Saudi Arabia submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt’ by Egypt for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.7), which was supported by Brazil, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Mauritania, Viet Nam, India and Paraguay. Saudi Arabia submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Modern dance in Germany’ by Germany.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that Germany had called a point of order.
6. The delegation of **Germany** notified the Chairperson that Germany also supported the amendment for ‘Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt’.
7. The **Secretary** clarified that the document read out by the Chairperson was the original document, but that emails had been received and will in any case be taken into account during the examination of the individual files.
8. The **Chairperson** continued, stating that Saudi Arabia had submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Modern dance in Germany’ by Germany for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.10). Paraguay submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Holy Week in Guatemala’ by Guatemala for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.13), which was supported by Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Panama, Peru, Rwanda and Viet Nam, though the list will be updated when examining this file. Bangladesh submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Yaldā/Chella’ by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.15), which was supported by Ethiopia, India, Malaysia, Republic of Korea and Uzbekistan. India submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘Orteke, traditional performing art in Kazakhstan: dance, puppet and music by Kazakhstan’ for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.20), which was supported by Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Morocco, Peru and Mauritania. Saudi Arabia submitted an amendment for the nomination ‘The art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiță) – an element of cultural identity in Romania and the Republic of Moldova’ by Romania and the Republic of Moldova for inscription on the Representative List (draft decision 17.COM 7.b.23), supported by Paraguay and Brazil, and probably others later.
9. The delegation of **Mauritania** also supported the amendment to the Romanian file.
10. The **Chairperson** reiterated that other support can be mentioned later during the examinations. For each file examined, the submitting State would have a total of two minutes after adoption to deliver a statement and/or show a video clip, as was customary. For multinational files, the total time allocated was three minutes. Members wishing to discuss or amend specific draft decisions on nominations to the Lists, proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices or requests for International Assistance were invited to inform the Secretariat as a matter of organization. In this way, the Bureau could establish a list of files for debate. The Chairperson then recalled several other important points about the procedure of debate under this item, which are the rules and working methods of the Committee. As for other items, priority is given to Committee Members, but the floor would also be given to States Parties non-members of the Committee and other Observers, if time allowed. A two-minute limit was set for each intervention. States non-members to the Committee shall not take the floor when the Committee examines individual nominations. The exception is given under Rule 22.4 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, according to which submitting States may take the floor to reply to specific questions and to provide information addressing questions raised by Committee Members concerning their file. The same rule specifies that submitting States, whether a Member of the Committee or not, shall not speak to advocate their own nominations but only to answer the specific questions raised.
11. The **Chairperson** clarified how he intended to proceed with regard to the decision-making process, which takes into account past decisions and practice, and also in light of the Committee’s Decision [11.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/8) regarding the clarification on the decision-making process concerning inscriptions, selection or approval of nominations, proposals and requests. In accordance with paragraph 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, the Chairperson had a duty to ensure the smooth conduct of the proceedings and maintenance of order, ensuring a spirit of consensus and international cooperation throughout the debates and decision-making. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the draft decisions proposed had been prepared by the Evaluation Body, a consultative body created to assist in the in-depth examination of nominations. Members were elected based on their expertise and with full consideration of balanced regional representation. Therefore, the debates shall demonstrate respect towards the expertise and diligent work of the Evaluation Body. When amendments are put forward, the Chairperson would seek to establish consensus through appreciating both supporting arguments and objections to those amendments. When an amendment is proposed, it would first be determined whether it receives an active, relative support from the Committee. He would thus look for expressions of support from at least one-third of the Committee Members. In the case of an objection by a Committee Member to that amendment, he would seek active broad support from the majority of the Committee Members. It was his understanding that the Members wished to maintain the tacit working agreement first put in place at the twelfth session of the Committee in 2017, by which Committee Members agreed to refrain from inscribing files that the Evaluation Body recommended *not* to inscribe and those in which more than two criteria were not met. In other words, if nominations had three, four or five criteria on which the Evaluation Body recommended to refer or not to inscribe, the agreement would be *not* to inscribe those nominations.
12. The **Chairperson** noted that this agreement had been upheld since its inception in 2017. Nevertheless, the Committee is free and sovereign to discuss nominations. This was not a fixed rule but rather a tacit agreement and, indeed, there were past cases when the debate was opened to discuss certain issues. However, the Committee eventually upheld the recommendations of the Evaluation Body given their expertise and experience. The Chairperson understood that some submitting States had withdrawn their nomination files in the spirit of the working agreement, for which he was grateful. Significant work had been undertaken by the Committee to improve the credibility, accountability and operationality of the listing mechanisms through the global reflection of the listing mechanisms that took place between 2018–2022, with a number of these revisions yet to take effect, as it will take a cycle or two to start seeing the results. However, some revisions were already operational, such as the dialogue process between the Evaluation Body and submitting States during the evaluation of nominations, for which there were eleven cases in this session. The smooth conduct of these debates is of prime importance and the Committee’s decision-making has an impact not only the work of the Committee but also of the Convention. As Members of the Committee, it was their duty to consider these points throughout the debates.
13. The delegation of **Brazil** commended the Evaluation Body for its report, from which many relevant lessons on the development of the Convention could be learned. Brazil and experts from the Intangible Cultural Heritage department had also analysed many of the files and know how difficult this task can be. Regarding the working agreement, the delegation recalled that since 2017, five dossiers with three or more unmet criteria, and one that was proposed for non-inscription had been opened by the Committee. Looking at all these expressions from different regional groups, it came to the conclusion that the working agreement – negotiated by that particular Committee – was more a general principle than an imperative law. Just as the Evaluation Body makes its analysis on a case-by-case basis, so should the Committee. The delegation understood that that there were some inconsistencies in this cycle that the Committee wished to debate. The Committee cannot step down from its responsibilities. When Members were elected, they committed themselves to analysing the files and to share their perceptions. Not to open files at the request of Members of the Committee would undermine the legitimacy of the Committee itself. The delegation supported having more dialogue and a broader view on some files so as to share impressions but also to listen to other impressions. It sought exchanges of viewpoints on the files and believed that dialogue was the core purpose of the Committee.
14. The **Chairperson** clarified that questions or comments at this stage should concern the working procedure and not the presentation of the Evaluation Body’s report.
15. The delegation of **Ethiopia** aligned with the comments made by Brazil. Recalling the Director-General’s remarks at the opening ceremony, it also appreciated the scientific community’s recommendations and abide by those regulations. However, concerning the working method proposed, the files have to be debated in the Committee in a democratic manner. Much discussion had taken place with regard to the needs of the country and capacity-building, and States Parties’ experience in preparing documents. Hence, why it was up to the Committee to discuss and reach its own conclusions.
16. The delegation of **India** noted the point of order raised by Germany regarding the ‘Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt’ and sought to know which other countries co-sponsored the amendment. It also wished to know the list of co-sponsors of the Moldova- Romanian amendment sponsored by Saudi Arabia.
17. The **Chairperson** explained thatthe list of co-sponsors would be mentioned following the case-by-case examination of the files.
18. The delegation of **Paraguay** appreciated the important work of the Evaluation Body. As a recent Member of the Committee, it had examined the Operational Directives and the Committee’s responsibility. It understood that the Committee is the supreme body of the Convention, and that the Committee has a responsibility and is accountable to States Parties according to the principles of the Convention. Indeed, some situations require dialogue. The delegation therefore supported Brazil’s proposal to analyse the elements and to pronounce its opinion given that different perspectives can be quite subjective, just like all human activities, thereby leading to divergent opinions. One process is always different to other processes, and it did not think that the Committee should apply rules that had been applied in the past, which was not in the spirit of the Convention. There are elements that must be examined by the Committee, and it is this dialogue which is the basis of democracy, peace and justice, which all Members of the Committee were working towards. Words are our working tools, and through dialogue the Committee will be able to handle difficult issues. There was objective data that proved the existence of an imbalance, as mentioned in the Evaluation Body’s report. The report also raised issues of concern that need to be addressed with clarity. The criteria seem to be very firm and at other times rather flexible, which was why it was normal to raise these concerns and which must be discussed within the Committee. We must let reason prevail through dialogue. We cannot let anyone be unheard.
19. The delegation of **Panama** echoed the remarks expressed by the different Members that it is important to have space for communication and dialogue, knowing that dialogue is the basis for these conversations and understanding. In many cases, as previously mentioned, not all States had been given the option to dialogue with the experts, which is an important and effective mechanism that had been put in place. The delegation therefore wished to give these States the opportunity to express their sentiments.
20. The delegation of **Angola** aligned with the intervention by Brazil and other countries that called for dialogue within the Committee. It was thus important for the Committee to discuss, listen and be sensitive to the subjects raised, which is only possible through dialogue and by listening to other Members of the Committee whose elements are inscribed on the Lists and to hear what they have to say in relation to the process.
21. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** wished toremind Observers that a large number of people were following the Committee’s work through live webcast or through the news media and it was thus important to keep as closely as possible to the schedule. He invited the Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body, Mr Kirk Siang Yeo, to present his report.
22. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body**, Mr Kirk Siang Yeo, focused on selected observations considered to be the most important in this cycle. The Evaluation Body comprised twelve members, with six experts representing States Parties (who are non-Members of the Committee) and another six members representing accredited NGOs. Two memberships expired automatically when the States they represented were elected as members of the Committee during the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022. This is because experts in the Evaluation Body have to be representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee. As the States Parties of two experts from Slovakia and Ethiopia were elected to the Committee, the two experts had to terminate their mandate. Nevertheless, these two experts had already completed all their evaluations in the period leading up to June and were able to fully participate in the June meeting when recommendations were agreed upon among members. In that sense, their departure in July only affected their participation in the September meeting when the Body discussed the ‘dialogue’ cases and finalized its report and recommendations. In that regard the evaluations and recommendations of all files involved all twelve members of the Body. The report of the Evaluation Body consisted of five working documents.
23. The **Rapporteur** presented the overall report covering general observations, working methods of the Body and thematic issues observed in this cycle. As countries began to lift travel restrictions, the Evaluation Body was able to meet in a mix of in-person and online modalities during this cycle. The first meeting was held fully online in February 2022. At this meeting, the Secretariat conducted an orientation for the Evaluation Body members and discussed various cross-cutting issues observed in past cycles. At the same meeting, the Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur were elected. The second meeting was held in person in June, at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. During this meeting the Body deliberated and arrived at decisions for each of the nomination files. At the third meeting in September 2022, the Chairperson and Rapporteur joined the Secretariat in Paris, while the rest of the Body participated online to discuss the files that underwent the dialogue mechanism, as well as the draft decisions and the overall report. To ensure neutrality, members of the Evaluation Body did not participate and were not involved in any way in the evaluations of files from their country of nationality or where their NGO is based. The Body’s work was guided by the Convention, the Operational Directives and decisions of previous Bodies. While the Body recognized the advantage of meeting in person, the online interface continued to be a useful platform and contributed to discussions and consensus building. The Body therefore commended the Secretariat for the well-designed tool and supported its continuous use for future cycles. This is the third cycle of the full implementation of the dialogue process, which is one of the concrete results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. As in past cycles, the dialogue process was only used when there was a *minor* lack of information or confusing statements that could be clarified through a simple question and answer exchange with the submitting State. The Evaluation Body emphasized that the dialogue process could not be used for files that lack substantial information, as it was intended for clarifications and not to provide new information that was not originally in the file.
24. The **Rapporteur** reported that the dialogue process was applied to 11 files, all of which were nominations to the Representative List, and that a total of 25 questions were asked. In several multinational files, questions were posed only to specific States within the group of submitting States, as the remaining submitting States had provided sufficient information in the file. While the majority of submitting States took advantage of the dialogue process, two of the files did not provide sufficient clarifications and therefore those files were recommended for referral. It was shown that 27 per cent of files were recommended for referral and 71 per cent of the files were recommended for inscription to the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Representative List, selection to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices or approval for International Assistance (see page 7 of the working document). The Body was successful in reaching consensus on all files, with the exception of the file ‘Modern dance in Germany’. After a lengthy debate, the Body was evenly split in its assessment of the file, with six members recommending inscription of the element and the remaining six members recommending not to inscribe the element. In view of the split decision, the Body decided to present a draft decision with two options, *yes* and *no,* to the Committee. This file would be further elaborated upon later in the session. The Evaluation Body congratulated the many communities, groups and individuals whose intangible cultural heritage was nominated, as well as the States Parties that had submitted nominations that conformed fully to the criteria outlined in the Operational Directives. During this cycle, the Body noted the increased number of good examples and well-drafted files, and the high quality of files in general. The Evaluation Body was also pleased to note that four previously referred files were recommended for inscription in this cycle. The submitting States had taken note of the previous comments made by the Body and resubmitted the files that were notably improved.
25. The **Rapporteur** noted that one of the key highlights of this cycle was the link between intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. The Evaluation Body described this year’s nominations as a ‘green cycle’ because 19 nominations had demonstrated positive links between intangible cultural heritage and the environment. Some examples of these links include environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, the sustainable use of natural materials, raising awareness about biocultural diversity, the traditional indigenous knowledge concerning nature and relationships with animals. This is an important development and one of the areas in which the Committee must continue to focus its attention, as many of the environmental issues challenging the world today are related to our understanding of and relationship with the living world and nature. By safeguarding such living heritage practices, which celebrate and respect the natural environment, we also are helping to reposition and – in some cases – regain our own cultural attitudes towards the environment. Another highlight of this cycle was the high number of multinational files. The Evaluation Body was pleased to examine 14 multinational files, which was higher than the previous cycle, highlighting the increased capacity of States Parties in coordinating such files, as well as a growing interest in safeguarding shared intangible cultural heritage. Such nominations promote mutual cooperation among countries and encourage dialogue and respect between the different communities in the submitting States. Many multinational nominations have also proposed joint safeguarding measures, and it was encouraging to note the collaborations between the communities and submitting States, with such efforts continuing after the inscription of the elements. The Body recognized the complexities of preparing multinational nominations and commended the efforts made by the submitting States. At the same time, the Body highlighted some of its observations. In several cases, the information provided by each individual State is different and the files were not able to highlight the shared nature of the elements among the submitting States. The Body recommended that multinational files should highlight common practices and characteristics of the element across the States, where possible. This can demonstrate the shared cultural practices and the cooperation among the States and communities. The second point concerned the provision of information. In several multinational files, there was an imbalance of information between the submitting States. The Body encouraged submitting States involved in multinational nominations to devote sufficient time and resources to the coordination and preparation of future nominations and to provide balanced information that comes from all submitting States. On the point of joint safeguarding measures, the Body recognized that safeguarding measures may be specific to each State and their context. At the same time, the Body highlighted that multinational files should also seek to include joint measures to safeguard the element as a shared heritage. This is important to create ties and encourage dialogue between the different communities and submitting States. In some files, the complete absence of any joint safeguarding measures prevented criterion R.3 from being met. At the same time, the Body noted that several multinational nominations included joint proposed measures, such as joint festivals, publications, and exchanges of knowledge and experience among the submitting States. Such collaborations are the positive reflection of work under the Convention, as they foster mutual respect and bring communities closer together.
26. The **Rapporteur** then spoke about the evidence of communities’ consent. In some cases, the communities’ letters only indicated consent for the nomination by the respective States and did not mention the multinational nature of the nomination. In such cases, it was unclear if the communities consented to the multinational nomination involving other States and communities. But the majority of the files demonstrated the agreement between States and the communities, which provided consent to the multinational character of the nomination. Several files provided detailed explanations of the active participation of the communities at all stages of the nomination process. Such positive examples of community participation among countries can serve as good practices for States that are preparing future nomination files. With regard to some observations specific to nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List, the rapporteur first raised the issue of definitions. In some cases, the descriptions of nominated elements were too generic and could be applied to any type of nominated element. In others, the broad definitions made it difficult to establish whether the element was defined as intangible cultural heritage under Article 2 of the Convention. Such broad definitions in turn made it difficult to determine the knowledge and skills associated with the element, the transmission of the element, as well as the community’s consent. The other point raised concerned the emphasis on products and items, which is a recurring issue. There is a strong focus on the material aspects of the element rather than the practices and techniques, social functions and cultural meanings associated with the element. The description of the files should focus on the practices of making the product or playing the instrument, as well as on the knowledge and skills that are transmitted, rather than focusing on the physical product or the instrument itself.
27. The **Rapporteur** reported on criterion R.2, with the Evaluation Body noting recurring issues. Similar to past cycles, several files provided information only about the visibility and awareness of the nominated element itself and did not provide sufficient information about the visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general. Technically, these files did not meet the criterion. However, the Body noted that this issue was discussed during the global reflection of the listing mechanisms. Therefore, the Body did not refer or reject any files solely on the basis of criterion R.2. Regarding criteria U.2 and R.3, the Evaluation Body observed a lack of information in several files regarding the involvement of communities in the development and implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures. Where possible, the Body used the dialogue process to clarify the information presented in the files. In some files, the nomination form included a list of communities with limited information on how they were involved in developing and implementing the proposed measures. Given the importance of involving communities in the safeguarding process, the Evaluation Body recommended to *refer* such files. Relating to criterion U.4/R.4, the Evaluation Body emphasized the importance of involving the bearers and practitioners throughout the nomination process. The majority of the files highlighted the various communities and provided clarity and details of their roles in the various stages of the nomination, including information on how they were involved in the preparation of the information, the video, the photographs, the inventorying process and other contributions. However, in a number of files the information provided lacked details concerning their active participation. In this regard, the Evaluation Body encouraged States Parties to define and describe ways of involving the communities during the preparation of the file. This lack of detail could result in the referral of a file.
28. The **Rapporteur** turned to the issue of the letters of consent. In this cycle, the Evaluation Body continued to see standardized, pre-filled letters, which were simply signed by various members of the communities concerned. The Evaluation Body therefore encouraged the use of personalized letters or videos, as these better express the involvement of the communities and their free, prior consent to the nomination. Some letters of consent referred to the wrong list, such as referring to the World Heritage List instead of one of the intangible cultural heritage Lists. This trend highlights the need to raise awareness among the communities and awareness of the nature and objectives of UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage Lists. On the issue of state institutions, the Body highlighted this in relation to the r ole of public officials and whether such public institutions and officials should be considered as members and representatives of the communities. In several files, the communities are described as public administration bodies, such as ministries, government agencies, state operated museums, and so on. In addition, letters of consent were sometimes provided by public officials and government institutions. The Body tends to consider that such public officials and government institutions are part of the State Party. However, it recognized that in some instances, chiefs or heads of organizations, troupes or tribes could be considered as authorized representatives of the community. Their roles should therefore be clearly explained in the file if they are to be considered as part of the communities of the nominated element.
29. The **Rapporteur** turned to criterion R.5, which the majority of files were able to fulfil, and the submitting States were able to provide detailed information of their inventories, including websites and documents. However, in several files, the Body observed a lack of information regarding the participation of communities in the inventorying process. As communities play an important role in the inventorying of their own intangible cultural heritage, the Body encouraged States Parties to ensure that inventories are developed and updated with the involvement of the communities. The Rapporteur highlighted several thematic issues, with the first issue concerning labels, trademarks and standards. In several files, the States Parties proposed a new label to protect the practice or the know-how from misappropriation. The Body recognizes that labels may help raise awareness of elements and their associated knowledge and skills, but at the same time, it is important to ensure that such labels and branding are not used as a means of claiming authenticity or ownership of the element, as these are contrary to the spirit of the Convention. In other files, particularly those involving food or craft practices, there were proposals to establish standards to ensure that the practice can be performed in the same standard way. While standards can be useful to define an element’s characteristics and techniques, there is also the risk of freezing the living heritage and limiting human creativity. In this regard, the Body encouraged States to pay close attention to this issue and to explain how such proposed labels or standards will enhance the viability of the element without impacting human creativity and the living nature of the element. On the issue of commercialization, the Body recognized that commercial activities are an important source of income for practitioners. Several files provided positive links between intangible cultural heritage and the sustainable livelihoods of the communities, describing the monitoring mechanisms put in place to address any unintended results from inscription. On the other hand, there may be a risk of over-commercialization and decontextualization of these practices if such activities are not well managed. Several files, especially files related to crafts and foodways, sometimes overlooked the problem by remaining silent on the issue and failing elaborate on possible unintended consequences [of inscription] and how they intend to mitigate them. They also do not provide details on how they would address the risk. This is a recurring issue, and the Secretariat is currently developing a guidance note on commercialization. In this cycle, a significant number of files were related to crafts and foodways: 32 per cent of the files were related to crafts and 20 per cent were related to culinary heritage or foodways. This appears to be a growing trend in recent years. The Body recognized that traditional cuisines, artisanal food preparation and the production of traditional crafts are forms of intangible cultural heritage. However, the Body would also like to reiterate that such files should focus on the knowledge and skills of the element and on the associated social practices, social functions and cultural meanings. The files should not focus primarily on the product itself. In view of the high number of nominations that represent a limited range or domain of intangible cultural heritage, the Body invited States Parties to consider the vast diversity of living heritage when nominating elements in future cycles.
30. The **Rapporteur** shared some of the challenges observed in this cycle. Firstly, there was the workload. The Body successfully evaluated all fifty-six files, and this immense workload was completed thanks to the dedication of all the Body members with the support of the Secretariat. However, the Body highlighted that considerable time is needed for these in-depth evaluations of each file. Any further increases to the annual ceiling of files will negatively affect the quality of the evaluation process. The Body noted the high quality of the nomination files in general for this cycle and many positive aspects were observed. At the same time, the Body took note that a number of files were recommended for *referral* as they were unable to fully meet the criteria, with various recurring issues observed. In particular, the Body noted that first-time nominations may not always be drafted in the appropriate manner. They may lack information or contain phrases that are not fully aligned with the spirit of the Convention. As a result, the Body was unable to evaluate these files in a positive way. This trend points to the need to strengthen the global facilitators network and to explore other ways of cooperation that can support capacity-building in different regions around the world. The overall report contained many positive aspects, recurring issues, emerging trends and challenges. The Rapporteur hoped that this report will be a useful reference for States Parties, organizations and communities when they prepare future nomination files and deliberate on the safeguarding of intangible heritage in their countries. In closing, the Body expressed gratitude to the Committee for entrusting its members with the evaluation process. In addition, it thanked the Secretariat team for their hard work and dedication in supporting the Body’s work. The draft decisions for the files would be presented by the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body, Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo, and the Vice-Chair, Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam.
31. The **Chairperson** thanked Mr Yeo for his presentation, noting the several critical and relevant issues raised and which would inform the debates of the Committee. He was particularly interested to know that the Evaluation Body had considered that the nominations presented to the Committee are part of a green cycle. Before adjourning the session, the Chairperson reminded the delegates of the several side events taking place during the lunch break.

*[Tuesday, 29 November, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2022**

1. The **Chairperson** returned to agenda item 7 and the oral report of the Evaluation Body delivered by the Rapporteur. He opened open the floor to Committee Members for comments or questions on the report of the Evaluation Body.
2. The delegation of **Switzerland** remarked that the report of the Evaluation Body revealed the quality of the work carried out by the experts. It provides quantitative and qualitative analyses, highlighting the issues, problems and developments in the files presented. Switzerland thanked all the experts and the Secretariat for their commitment in producing this report. The Body provided several relevant recommendations. First, the recommendation of strong community involvement in the preparation of the nomination files is a requirement of the Convention and often a challenge for all submitting States. To respond to this, capacity-building and the training of facilitators are avenues to be prioritized and supported. Secondly, the quality of multinational applications still needs to be improved. In this regard, it was recalled that the Evaluation Body had requested the Secretariat to prepare a guidance note for the preparation of multinational files. The high quality of the files submitted was also noted, with 71 per cent of nominations recommended for inscription. Among these were several files that had previously been referred. This was welcomed, as it showed that a referral proposal is not to be considered a failure. On the contrary, it encourages the submitting State to improve the quality of the file. In this regard, the evaluations provided relevant indications and guidance for all submitting States. Recognizing the expertise of the Body, Switzerland would undertake to maintain the Body’s recommendations and respect the working agreement. Working methods can and must evolve. However, these adaptations must take place independently from the processing of nomination files.
3. The delegation of **Brazil** extended its respect and support for the huge work of the Evaluation Body, whose comments are very important for the future of the Convention. It drew attention to the reflection raised in paragraph 45 regarding tourism and standardization that – in its view – could benefit from discussions under the 2005 Convention. The report also highlighted some geographical imbalances, and the delegation agreed with paragraph 36 that greater capacity building in some regions was needed. This imbalance in the Lists is the reason Brazil had proposed an amendment to the draft decision. The delegation clarified that its views are not caused by any particular stakeholder but that it was a structural issue and a common responsibility of the entire UNESCO community. Every gesture counts, and some measures could perhaps be taken to reduce these imbalances. The most obvious way is through the dialogue approach. The report noted that eleven files had benefitted from this new tool. Some of the inconsistencies, observed by Brazilian experts in their evaluations, could have been avoided by improving this quick but relevant space for dialogue. Brazil had presented an amendment in this regard. As for the Members of the Committee, they must increase dialogue and use every source to contribute to new perceptions of the Convention. One good example was provided by Sweden in sponsoring the important reflection on Article 18 of the Convention, for which it was grateful. Another good opportunity is the Committee itself, which comprises experts from twenty-four countries who have an excellent opportunity to respond to some of the questions raised by the Evaluation Body in this cycle. The delegation commended the efforts already undertaken through the dedicated working groups, and renewed its support so that new proposals can be fully and rapidly implemented. A more geographically balanced Representative List will give more legitimacy to the actions of the Secretariat and contribute to the scope of this Convention.
4. The delegation of **Czechia** expressed its respect and gratitude for all the work done by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body in this cycle. The burden of work had increased, but still the Body managed to finish its work in time and submit a good quality report. Unfortunately, not all files could be evaluated positively, even when the dialogue process was applied. The Committee should keep exploring ways to resolve most of the issues of the files before they come before the Committee. Among other things, it was noted that the Evaluation Body report had suggested setting up a system of using external information in a transparent and formalized way during the evaluation process (paragraph 29 in the report). Such a possibility could remove some of the remaining problems, but probably not all of them. This could be related, in particular, to criterion R.1 and possibly R.5, but probably not to other criteria. The delegation asked the Evaluation Body to elaborate on the discussion on how external information could be acquired. The delegation expressed the wish that the Committee honour the working agreement and, even if a discussion is opened, as requested by several Members, the Committee will not inscribe elements with more than two unmet criteria. Applying such an approach to its own referred file in the past, Czechia strongly believed that a referral on several criteria is not a negative outcome but rather a signal that the presentation of the element at stake is not clear, comprehensive or comprehensible enough, and that there is more work to be done to prepare a truly effective safeguarding strategy to make sure that the communities have been and will remain the main driving forces of the development and implementation of safeguarding measures. The delegation was delighted to learn the great news that all the urgent safeguarding and international assistance files and a majority of Good Safeguarding Practices nominations were evaluated positively. It congratulated all the States whose files had been recommended for inscription.
5. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** appreciated the comprehensive report by the Evaluation Body on its activities during 2022, thanking all its members, both experts and NGOs, for their extensive work completed during this cycle. Most of the evaluations and recommendations were extremely helpful, both for the Committee and the submitting States. The number of files submitted for consideration is increasing every year, and this requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from the Evaluation Body. Despite this, all the deadlines had been met. The delegation had reviewed the five working documents of the Evaluation Body and had observed improvements in the nomination files. It was glad that the recently adopted upstream dialogue process had also been utilized to improve the quality of the files. Considering the findings and decisions of the Evaluation Body, the delegation would examine them one by one to achieve the essential goal of the Convention, which is to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and to provide mutual assistance at the international level. The delegation underscored the crucial role of the communities throughout the nomination process, and it therefore support the draft decision.
6. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** commended the Evaluation Body for its detailed report and work. It referred to the recommendations made by the Body, specifically, on preparing multinational nominations, the use of external information and the issue of commercialization. The urgent implementation of these recommendations is a guarantee of greater objectivity in the expeditious examination and adoption of the Committee’s decisions. The delegation suggested that the reflection be carried out by the Secretariat in order to develop guidance notes on these recommendations. These notes could serve as a framework for the Evaluation Body and would be submitted to the Committee for examination and adoption. These guidance notes could establish, among other things, the principles and conditions of the dialogue process between the Evaluation Body and the submitting States, as well as a form of working agreement adopted by the Committee. The delegation sought the opinion of the Secretariat on this proposal regarding the reflection and elaboration of guidance notes to be submitted to the Committee.
7. The delegation of **Ethiopia** commended the Evaluation Body for accomplishing a heavy workload and appreciated the Secretariat for facilitating the work of the Evaluation Body. The report is very extensive and explanatory, pinpointing basic thematic issues and other relevant concerns affecting the communities in the context of the Convention. Nevertheless, it sought clarification from the Evaluation Body on thematic areas concerning labels and trademarks, the practice versus the product, and over-commercialization and decontextualization in the context of sustainable development. Apart from the positive observations and comments made by the Evaluation Body and clarifications given at this morning’s session, the delegation wished to know: *how many issues raised in the Committee’s previous decisions had been addressed in the present cycle*.
8. The delegation of **Malaysia** expressed its appreciation of the Evaluation Body’s commitment and dedication, and for the work undertaken by the experts, especially considering the very difficult and challenging circumstances in 2022. The recommendations by the Evaluation Body are pertinent and clear. Concerns were raised by the Evaluation Body about the definition of specific intangible cultural heritage elements in some proposals, the central role of communities, groups and individuals in the submission, planning and implementation of the programmes, issues concerning the preparation of multinational nominations and issues of over-commercialization. The Evaluation Body undertook a huge workload, considering the fifty-six files of all categories that it had to examine. Despite the growing number of files, the Evaluation Body was able to provide great analysis and expertise in its examination of the files, which would help the Committee make informed decisions. Over the years, it was evident that there is an increasing number of multinational submissions, with fourteen multinational files evaluated in this cycle. Malaysia expressed the importance of this category of nominations, which should be continuously prioritized as they enabled States Parties within and across regions that share similar cultures to come together. This will encourage international cooperation and dialogue relating to living heritage. Malaysia echoed the concerns raised by States Parties regarding the dialogue process, by which not all States concerned were given the opportunity to undergo the process. Malaysia understood the explanation given by the Rapporteur. Nonetheless, it believed that this process is crucial and should be extended to all files that do not fulfil the criteria. This would provide the necessary platform to improve the files, even though this would increase the workload of the Evaluation Body. Finally, Malaysia was also concerned about the issue of over-commercialization which appeared in several files. In this regard, there was a need for a clear understanding as to where to draw the line in terms of the commercialization and over-commercialization of the element.
9. The delegation of **Morocco** thanked the Evaluation Body for the quality of its clear and comprehensive report, and commended the Secretariat for its work in this regard. It emphasized the importance of the dialogue process between the submitting States and the Evaluation Body, which was used in eleven cases in this cycle. However, many States Parties that had submitted nomination files indicated that they had not benefitted from this mechanism to provide information and clarifications, and thus make necessary adjustments to their file. For this reason, the delegation asked that the dialogue process be extended to all files in the future and that the necessary measures be taken to overcome any technical or budgetary constraints they might have. For this reason, and many others, it had no issue with the Committee opening the debate on nominations files if requested by the submitting States. This would allow the submitting State to respond to the remarks and observations of the Evaluation Body. This debate in no way calls into question the work or conclusions of the Evaluation Body. It simply allows for a democratic and equitable process as it confirms the sovereignty of the Committee and its decisions. The delegation also believed that the spirit of the 2003 Convention is different from the 1972 Convention. The objective of the 2003 Convention is to encourage the inscription of intangible cultural heritage in all four corners of the world, with the objective of achieving good geographical balance and an equitable presence. It sought to see the Rabat session launch a fairer and more balanced approach in the evaluation of the nominations to the 2003 Convention. The working agreement was still in place when making decisions, but could in no way become a sacred rule.
10. The delegation of **Germany** expressed gratitude to the Evaluation Body for its valuable and extensive work. It had one question: *how can the Evaluation Body better include the ethical principles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage into its work, for instance, concerning gender equality?* The delegation believed in adhering to the working agreement to ensure the credibility of the Convention, the Committee and the Lists.
11. The delegation of **Slovakia** commended the Evaluation Body for the high quality of its work and for its exhaustive report. It declared its commitment to the working agreement, which it considered crucial to maintain the efficient, effective and consistent way of working of this Committee. The delegation recognized all the efforts of States Parties invested in the process of preparation and submission of nomination files, proposals and International Assistance requests in this cycle. It especially commended the States Parties that had submitted their first nomination files, even though it believed that the number was too low. The delegation therefore welcomed even more significant action to support communities and States Parties. It supported the proposal by Sweden to open the possibility of requesting international assistance for the preparation of nomination files for States with no inscriptions on the Representative List. It also agreed with other forms of cooperation, including on a bilateral level, to accompany the nomination processes. In this respect, the newly established UNESCO Group of Friends of SIDS and Group of Friends of Africa are useful initiatives, as they can serve as platforms for facilitating concrete forms of cooperation and assistance between Member States. Slovakia is ready to take an active role. The recommendation to refer an element in no way constitutes a judgement on the merits of the element itself. A referral provides an opportunity for the submitting State to improve the description of the element and related safeguarding measures, to ensure the strongest participation of the communities, and so on. It is an opportunity to present the precious elements of intangible cultural heritage on the Convention webpage and related online digital tools related to awareness raising of the Convention. Moreover, the improved description can serve as a reference for upcoming files. Nomination files are an important tool for promoting and presenting elements of intangible heritage at all levels. It is therefore important that they be written in a clear and understandable manner. The delegation was pleased to note that the dialogue process was successfully used over the last three years and that there was an increasing trend. Despite the time, effort and great personal involvement of the stakeholders involved, the Body asks more questions every year. In 2020, there were eleven questions, twenty-two questions in 2021 and twenty-five questions in 2022. There was an evident connection between the dialogue process and the high percentage of positive recommendations, which begs the question: *what is the capacity to increase the use of the dialogue process even more?*
12. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its excellent report and for its careful reading of the files. It also highlighted the importance of respecting the Evaluation Body’s expertise and the observations and recommendations contained in its report. Sweden was pleased to see the positive aspects of the Body’s evaluations, especially the increased number of files that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. However, a number of challenges and problems also remain to be addressed. For instance, the sometimes marginal roles of concerned actors from civil society, and the issues of standardization and over-commercialization. In this regard, the delegation asked the Evaluation Body *if it had any further recommendations for States Parties on how to make use of the expertise and resources within communities and NGOs in the drafting process of the files.* Sweden also highlighted the Body’s comment on the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage and the importance of articulating knowledge, practice and skills. It noted a tendency to sometimes describe things and places instead of knowledge and customs, and it wondered why that was. *Does the Evaluation Body have any specific suggestions on how to solve this challenge?* The fifty-six files add up to an impressive diversity of intangible cultural heritage from different corners of the world. According to the examination, a referral is usually due to insufficient information on ways to safeguard the element, how to cooperate with and involve stakeholders, or how to raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage. This is the very essence of the Convention, and it is therefore crucial for the status of the Convention that the Body’s recommendations be taken into account. A referral is a call for clarification, not a dismissal. The dialogue process is one way of facilitating the nomination process. *Does the Body have any other suggestions on ways to make this process clearer and easier to understand?* *In which cases is the [dialogue] process used?* Sweden thanked the States Parties that had contributed to the diversity of living heritage as well as the States that had withdrawn their files. This shows respect for the tremendous work carried out by the Body and facilitates the work of this Committee. It would later propose an amendment to the draft decision on the granting of international assistance in the preparation of a first nomination.
13. The **Chairperson** thanked Sweden for its interesting intervention, noting the many questions on the dialogue process, concurring that it would be good to hear the method used by the Evaluation Body and its interaction with the submitting States.
14. The delegation of **India** appreciated the Evaluation Body for its commendable work on evaluating the nomination files submitted for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List. It wished to see an improved mechanism adopted and extended for the capacity-building programmes. The delegation concurred that multinational nominations need to be encouraged, as they further the spirit and mandate of the Convention. *How could the Committee achieve this?* It was imperative to accord importance to the upstream dialogue process in order to address the issues related to geographical imbalances but also over-commercialization. Clear guidelines could be issued in order to better understand and address the issues of over-commercialization. The delegation wished to see a step-by-step process towards that aim. It called upon the Secretariat to suggest new ways to generate funds to better manage the Convention, as well as to evaluate a greater number of inscriptions permitted per State Party. For a 10,000-year-old culture, having more than 1,900 languages, home to 1.4 billion people, 20 per cent of the population on Earth, a single nomination every two years was not enough to reflect the diversity of India and the Indian subcontinent. More was required to increase the number of nominations.
15. The **Chairperson** thanked India for the many interesting points raised. Indeed, the Committee had to reflect on how to move things forward. Every country had its own specificities, whether cultural, social or demographic, all of which must be taken into account. It seemed that the Committee cannot have a standardized approach with all the files and that it will have to evolve in relation to this point in the future.
16. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the Evaluation Body for its detailed report, congratulating its members on the excellent work done and for presenting their results within the allotted time. It welcomed the improvement in the evaluation of the files, the number of multinational files, and the link between intangible cultural heritage and the environment. The delegation also commended the rigorous work carried out based on each criterion. Nevertheless, as highlighted in some cases, the Evaluation Body had used the dialogue process to examine certain criteria. It sought to have greater detail on how the Evaluation Body decided to establish the dialogue process set out in the Operational Directives. The delegation understood that there are financial restrictions. Nevertheless, it believed that the dialogue process should be available for the greatest number of files possible that require clarification. It also believed that there were specific circumstances related to the preparation of the files put forward for the 2019–2021 cycles, which had been prepared during the pandemic. Of course, this had an impact and conditioned the preparation of the files themselves. For this reason, special consideration should have been given to these files under a process of dialogue, irrespective of how many criteria had been met or not. The delegation echoed the sentiment of other Members in giving those countries that request it the opportunity to provide further information with regard to their submissions.
17. The delegation of **Rwanda** thanked the Evaluation Body for its commendable work and the Secretariat for its facilitation. It was noted that the Evaluation Body had opened the dialogue process for eleven files, nine of which were recommended for inscription. Although the dialogue process had been proven to be an effective mechanism between the submitting States and the Evaluation Body, it was unfortunate that the dialogue process had not been applied in the evaluation of other files requiring further clarification. Taking into account the Evaluation Body’s own conclusions in its report on the 2022 evaluation cycle, where it defines the two regional groups with the best candidacy dossiers, Rwanda recommended and strongly encouraged that the dialogue process for developing countries be part of the evaluation. It strongly believed that efforts in developing the capacity of States Parties, related to the elaboration of the safeguarding measures, should be strengthened through greater use of the International Assistance mechanism.
18. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** thanked the Evaluation Body for its hard work and dedication in evaluating the fifty-six nominations in this cycle despite the challenges. The Body maintained a high level of consistency in the evaluations, which is an important way of ensuring the credibility of the listing mechanisms. The delegation also noted that the dialogue process was actively implemented for eleven nominations, in accordance with paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives, and nine nominations were now recommended to be inscribed on the List through this process. This was possible thanks to the hard work done by both the Evaluation Body and the submitting States, who showed flexibility and a spirit of cooperation. The delegation also appreciated the Secretariat’s plan to publish guidelines on commercialization. This is not a simple task given the diverse circumstances in different countries. However, this was necessary because the needs of the communities that want or need to commercially use their element for tourism must be accommodated. Now that the global reflection of the listing mechanisms was successfully completed, the Body was expected to play a greater and more extensive role. All these points will result in the desired outcome of the Committee ensuring a sustainable working mechanism for the Evaluation Body.
19. The delegation of **Paraguay** welcomed the huge work carried out by the Evaluation Body, adding that it was useful and educational to understand how the process works, as it undoubtedly lays the foundation to move towards nominations that, above all, include the participation of communities. It was clear that intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary, living, inclusive, representative and based on communities. The delegation agreed with the need for greater balance on the Representative List, and it understood that it would be a good idea to look into a pedagogical role that helps States better understand how to clearly identify intangible cultural heritage elements, while emphasizing the central role played by communities. In our cultures, intangible cultural heritage is primarily community-based, and that is where the indicators are needed to faithfully understand this feature, as the bearers of heritage are members of indigenous communities. It is occasionally very difficult to implement forms based on the level of expertise in the field. With regard to over-commercialization, the delegation was concerned about how this is measured. *What indicators are used?* Often people use their dynamic elements to exist and subsist.
20. The delegation of **Bangladesh** commended the comprehensive report by the Evaluation Body, reassured that States Parties attach great importance to the Convention, particularly to the communities. It further appreciated the nuances of the remarks and observations made by the Evaluation Body. The informative oral report presented by the Rapporteur also presented a guideline to better understanding the Convention and its procedures. Furthermore, the delegation appreciated the challenges faced in evaluating the files, thanking the Evaluation Body for its technical assessment. However, it remains important that the elected Member States assess the nominations and decide on the inscriptions. While the delegation stressed the importance of proving the active participation of the communities concerned, it also emphasized the importance and need to provide a comprehensive dissemination of technical information on the parameters for presenting community participation. To this end, the delegation asked the Secretariat to consult with the Member States and, if possible, present a format that may be used to prepare a questionnaire and consent form for the communities concerned. The ultimate objective should be to make the inscription process as easy as possible so that the inscribed elements focus more on post-inscription safeguarding mechanisms so that the intangible heritage of humankind is well safeguarded for posterity. Inscriptions are not about glorious achievements but are about our responsibility to protect them.
21. With no further comments from Committee Members, the **Chairperson** opened the floor to Observers.
22. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked and congratulated the Evaluation Body for its clear and excellent report, with its many issues raised. It noted the strong request to extend dialogue in order to include more files, and it suggested that Committee Members consider a working group to examine this question as well as the other questions that were raised, such as the working method of the Committee and the question of standardized consent letters for communities, a proposal by Bangladesh that had merit. The delegation took note that the Evaluation Body lost two members in June in order to comply with the rules, which may have been problematic for the Body, as ten members instead of twelve were given the burden of work. The delegation suggested an extraordinary session right after the General Assembly with the purpose of electing two of the missing experts of the Evaluation Body. With regard to the proposal by Sweden, supported by Slovakia, on granting International Assistance for the preparation of nomination files to States Parties with no element inscribed, the delegation suggested extending it to developing countries, including SIDS, to make it fairer. It congratulated the Secretariat for the quality of the working documents.
23. The delegation of the **Dominican Republic** congratulated the Chairperson for the excellent organization of this session. This Convention has a direct impact in the field and in the lives of people. The pandemic and the suffering that it caused made it clear that culture in all its forms is essential when it comes to the proper functioning of sustainable societies. The delegation welcomed the immense work of the Evaluation Body as reflected in the report, thanking the Body for its meticulous work. Nevertheless, unfortunately, in this cycle there was no geographical balance with regard to the nominations to the Representative List, even though there were proposals from Groups III and V(a). The Body plays an essential role, but it cannot replace the mandate of the Committee, which should exercise that mandate. Indeed, States with no elements inscribed have priority; their submitted files should therefore be prioritized and considered for upstream dialogue. The delegation was convinced that opening up and implementing upstream dialogue would mean that the Fund would not have to be used. Instead, it could contribute directly to the financial stability of the Convention. The dialogue process was conducted on eleven files, which showed that dialogue is possible, and the Committee should therefore work to standardize such dialogue. Not doing so would establish privileges or favoured States, which went against the spirit of the Convention.
24. The delegation of **Lithuania** thanked the Evaluation Body for its work and for the high quality of its report, highlighting good examples and meticulous observations and recommendations based on an in-depth analysis of the files. This will serve as a source of inspiration for States Parties in their upcoming efforts to prepare conclusive files. It appreciated the working principles of the Body, which were consistent with previous approaches, while monitoring the criteria defined in the Operational Directives, prioritizing the content of the files in the evaluation process, and the application of the dialogue process, among others. The delegation shared the opinion that in some cases the option to refer files serves as an essential tool to improve the quality of the files, even giving precious time to the submitting States to implement important safeguarding measures before their re-submission. This would help improve safeguarding plans, which is one of the most important ways to implement the Convention. The delegation was delighted to note the growing number of multinational files and supported the invitation to prepare guidance notes to help States Parties navigate the fairly complex multinational process.
25. The delegation of **Cuba** took note of the report by the Evaluation Body, highlighting the importance of its work when it comes to guaranteeing the inscription process of the Lists. However, the evaluation must also reflect the priorities set out in the Operational Directives of the Convention, covering such essential issues as regional balance, paying attention to priority groups, linguistic diversity, and harmonization with other Conventions, which should all be reflected in the results of the Evaluation Body. The delegation regretted the lack of balance in this cycle, particularly with regard to the Latin America and Caribbean region, and for SIDS. None of the files from this region benefitted from upstream dialogue, including countries that had submitted a file for the first time. The delegation believed that the upstream dialogue process should be part of the mechanism, as outlined in Article 55 of the Operational Directives. The evaluation cannot compete in terms of regional groups able to prepare their best files, especially when it comes to communities and bearers taking part in the process. The delegation supported the remarks made by Brazil, Morocco, Malaysia, India, Rwanda, Peru, Paraguay and Bangladesh, sharing the same concerns expressed by these States. It was convinced that Morocco will be a starting point to improve the evaluation system and this Convention. The delegation thanked Spain for providing Spanish interpretation.
26. The delegation of **Argentina** thanked the authorities of Morocco for organizing this seventeenth session, thanking UNESCO, the Secretariat and the Chairperson. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its very detailed report. As mentioned by a number of other delegations, Argentina also had concerns about the imbalance and representation of some regions on the Lists. The delegation echoed the request to strengthen national and local capacity, as well as upstream dialogue between the Evaluation Body and the submitting States, which is as an essential part of the process for nominations. It believed that dialogue at each stage of implementation of the Convention is necessary, which is why this should be part of the approach, echoing the sentiments expressed by others that these issues need to be debated in depth.
27. The delegation of **Guatemala** thanked the Evaluation Body for the immense work achieved in evaluating the many files for this cycle. As a State Party, Guatemala was interested in promoting balanced dialogue in order to ensure that all submitting States have an opportunity to be heard, which highlights the importance of regional balance. The delegation understood that inscription is not a competition and that all States should be given the opportunity to allay any concerns in their files in a fair manner, in particular for States that did not benefit from the dialogue process. Intangible cultural heritage is important in every State. The communities manage and implement all the safeguarding measures together with all the actors in the different communities, which was why the process must be done in a fair manner so that each and every one of the submitting States has the right to be heard.
28. The **Chairperson** thanked the Vice-Minister for his intervention.
29. The delegation of **Haiti** thanked the Evaluation Body for its colossal work, as evidenced by this report. It wished to underline paragraph 36, which drew attention to the quality of files submitted by Groups I and II, which provides food for thought. The delegation echoed the remarks made by Members from Group III and Group V(a) to call for a much greater dialogue, and asked why not apply priority to SIDS in this Convention, which would mean greater dialogue for these developing island countries that need these mechanisms and see themselves represented, commensurate with their contributions to this very important Convention. The delegation reiterated Haiti’s support for the nomination of the element submitted by Cuba, and which is very dear to Haiti and throughout the region.
30. The delegation of **Norway** echoed the remarks expressed by Sweden, Czechia and Switzerland, among others, that had insisted that the decision related to the examination of nominations to the Lists and the Register be based on expert knowledge. It highlighted the importance of the work of non-governmental organizations and encouraged their continued and strong involvement.
31. The delegation of **Spain** thanked the Chairperson for hosting this meeting, and the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their great work, acknowledging that it is extremely complex to carry out this work online and that it welcomed the report. Nevertheless, like other States Parties, particularly in Groups III and V(a), Spain insisted that the dialogue process should be systematic, as the application is not transparent with respect to some States.
32. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** invited the Rapporteur to respond to the questions raised.
33. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** thanked the States Parties for the encouraging words offered to the Evaluation Body for its work and report. The dialogue process is actually intended to be a simple question-and-answer exchange that is posed to the submitting State, which is intended to clarify any statement that is unclear in the file or to correct some technical errors that can be resolved by a simple answer. In the current form, it is not intended to be a way to solicit or address more complex issues that cannot be resolved. This had been the fundamental approach. If a file had sufficient information and the Evaluation Body deemed that the file was sufficiently complete to make a decision or an evaluation, then no questions were posed in the dialogue process. Related to that question is a question about capacity. *Can the Evaluation Body increase the number of evaluations?* The Rapporteur noted the already heavy and substantial workload. There were suggestions to widen the dialogue process. Of course, that has to be considered and decided in terms of the overall workload on both the Evaluation Body and, of course, the Secretariat, which also supported this work. On the related issues of dialogue posed by Czechia on the use of external information, the Body believed that additional information could possibly enhance the evaluation process, as mentioned in the report. But at the same time, the Evaluation Body carries out its evaluations based on the information contained in the file and not on information gained through experience or knowledge from personal visits or information found online. The Evaluation Body discussed this point at length—*how can it use such external information?* There are indeed defined sources that can be used, sources of information that are accurate, but in what way would it be a fair approach, as sources have to be in English and French in order for the Evaluation Body to use such information. *How can the Evaluation Body have a more consistent and transparent approach?* Unfortunately, the Body does not have a concrete solution or a proposal at present that can address this issue.
34. The **Rapporteur** explained that some ideas had been discussed. For example, there were suggestions on perhaps doing a video interview with communities. But again, that would have to be considered in terms of the timeline given for the evaluation, the number of files to be evaluated, and the process—*how do we establish such processes?* There was a question from Ethiopia regarding trademarks, labels, practice and products, and links to sustainable development. In the presentation earlier, the Rapporteur had mentioned that the Body recognized the importance of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable livelihoods of communities. Sustainable livelihoods that can improve the lives of people are an important consideration for sustainable development. At the same time, there is a lot of discussion about the issue of commercialization. *At what point is there over-commercialization?* That is an issue the Body wished to have further clarity on, and it looked forward to the guidelines currently being prepared by the Secretariat. Germany had a question on ethical principles and how they were included in the evaluation, as well as gender-related aspects. It was noted that gender issues are addressed in the current nomination form. Submitting States have to provide sufficient information on gender-related issues. The Body did notice that there were files that were silent on gender roles, so there were files that were either predominantly male or predominantly female. However, the Body would have appreciated to have the context further elaborated as to why there were specific gender roles, which could be due to history or the social context. That kind of explanation would be very useful to determine whether there are issues concerning gender or whether it is an acceptable part of gender roles that reflect the culture, history and practice of the submitting State.
35. The **Chairperson** thanked the Rapporteur for the clarifications.
36. The **Secretary** responded to the questions directed to the Secretariat concerning the elaboration of guidance notes for multinational files, which was requested in 2021, as mentioned in the draft decision. The Secretary explained that the Secretariat had been asked to elaborate on the outcomes of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and had waited for those outcomes, but was now proceeding to elaborate guidance notes on multinational files. Concerning the question from Bangladesh on establishing a questionnaire format for community involvement. The Secretary believed that there should be some discussion on what would be required. Many recommendations by the Evaluation Body ask not to have a standard format. Thus, any decision on a standard format would require a broader discussion, but of course the Secretariat could easily elaborate a standard format if that is advised after the reflection.
37. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** returned to the question by Sweden on the use of expertise and resources that could be useful to help a nomination in the future. There are several means. For example, there is the global network of facilitators, as mentioned in the report. The Body believed that NGOs and expertise from university researchers are very important. Many NGOs have valuable resources that can support future nominations. The Evaluation Body had tried to be as detailed as possible in its report and presentation. It was hoped that the issues highlighted in the report will be useful references for countries to consider when preparing nominations in the future.
38. The **Chairperson** reminded the Committee that draft decision 17.COM 7 would be examined after the examination of the individual decisions under sub-items 7.a, 7.b, 7.c and 7.d. The Chairperson therefore suspended draft decision 17.COM 7.

**ITEM 7.a OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/7.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.a-EN.docx)

*See*[*4 nominations*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7a-urgent-safeguarding-list-01280)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the examination of sub-item 7.a and examination of nominations for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.
2. The **Secretary** explained that under this sub-item, the Committee would examine the four nominations submitted by Chile, Türkiye, Viet Nam and Albania, in that order. The file from Albania is a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List combined with a request for International Assistance. Before starting the examination of the nominations, the criteria guiding the Committee’s decisions were projected onto the screen. Submitting States were asked to demonstrate that a nominated element satisfies all five criteria: U.1, U.2, U.3, U.4, U.5. Criterion U.6 applies in special cases, but was not under consideration in this session.
3. The **Chairperson** turned to the examination of the individual files, inviting the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body to present the first nomination.
4. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body**, Mr Pier Luigi Petrillo, presented the first nomination file, **Quinchamalí and Santa Cruz de Cuca pottery** [draft decision 7.a.1] submitted by **Chile**. The element is embedded in the mestizo cultural tradition of central Chile and is characterized by black functional and decorative objects with white accents created using techniques dating back centuries. The production encompasses various stages, from the gathering of raw clay materials to the production and finishing of the products. A source of social and economic autonomy, the practice highlights women’s non-subordinate role in gender relations. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explains the various threats to the element, describing in particular three risk factors which highlight the need for urgent safeguarding, and the proposed safeguarding plan is clear. However, the file points out that one of the main problems is the lack of legal protection for the production related to intellectual property. In this regard, the Body recalled that inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List does not mention intellectual property rights. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.a.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.a.1) **adopted to inscribe Quinchamalí and Santa Cruz de Cuca pottery** **on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
6. The delegation of **Chile** thanked Morocco for its hospitality and expressed appreciation and thanks to the Committee for the nomination and inscription of the Quinchamalí and Santa Cruz de Cuca pottery on the Urgent Safeguarding List, which will benefit the region of Quinchamalí and Santa Cruz de Cuca. For more than two centuries, artisans have developed these black and white pottery techniques. The techniques have long been established as part of Chile’s cultural heritage and transmitted from generation to generation in an uninterrupted manner to the present day. They are both ornamental and useful objects, such as bowls and other implements. The feminine forms of the girl carrying the guitar and the worker in the fields have been stylized. The protagonists of this art form are central to rural life. Furthermore, the gender roles are respected. To ensure that the tradition of this pottery-making continues, it is important to attract the younger generation. However, maintaining this tradition will require mobilization and cooperation at different levels to ensure future transmission. The cultural authorities from Quinchamalí and Santa Cruz de Cuca extended their thanks for this recognition. This successful inscription had been possible thanks to this great level of cooperation.
7. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional Ahlat stonework** [draft decision 7.a.2] submitted by **Türkiye**. Traditional Ahlat stonework refers to the knowledge, methods, skills and aesthetic understanding surrounding the extraction, shaping and ornamentation of volcanic Ahlat stones. It also involves the creation of structures and artefacts. Its bearers and practitioners include stone miners, stone carvers, stonemasons and motif designers. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and highly appreciated the nomination of an element that demonstrates the close links between the conservation of tangible cultural heritage and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The nomination file provided a clear explanation for the need of urgent safeguarding, and the safeguarding plan is current with this situation. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
8. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.a.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.a.2) **adopted to inscribe Traditional Ahlat stonework** **on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
9. The delegation of **Türkiye** explained that the traditional Ahlat stonework refers to the knowledge, methods, skills and aesthetic understanding surrounding the extraction of volcanic Ahlat stones, shaping and ornamenting the stones, and then using them to create structures and artefacts. Ahlat stone is a volcanic stone extracted by traditional methods from the foothills of the Mountain Nemrut located near Ahlat, a district of the Bitlis province. Traditional Ahlat stonework has great importance for Ahlat as a part of urban identity and image. Traditional houses constructed using Ahlat stones not only represent an architectural style, they also reflect social and cultural life. Traditional knowledge around the element has been transmitted from generation to generation for centuries. But its viability has faced serious threats in the last decades owing to demographic changes and the widespread use of modern building techniques and materials in the region. This inscription demonstrates the close links between the conservation of tangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding. The delegation was grateful for the strong networking and cooperation among stakeholders at local and national levels. During the file preparation process, local administrations, NGOs, academics, bearers and practitioners worked together in harmony. The delegation was very appreciative for the recognition of these joint efforts by all related partners to identify the element and elaborate safeguarding measures.

*[A video of the element was projected]*

1. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Art of pottery-making of Chăm people** [draft decision 7.a.3] submitted by **Viet Nam**. Chăm pottery products are mainly household utensils, religious objects and fine art works, including jars, pots, trays and vases. They are an expression of the individual creativity based on the knowledge transmitted within the community. The pottery is not glazed but fired outdoors with firewood and straw for seven to eight hours at a temperature of about 800°C. Raw materials are collected locally, and the knowledge and skills are passed on to younger generations within families through hands-on practice. The Evaluation Body considered that the nominatios met all five criteria. The file was well explained and despite many safeguarding efforts, the viability of the element is still at risk because of various threats. The file detailed the safeguarding plan for the element, which will be implemented over four years. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.a.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.a.3) **adopted to inscribe Art of pottery-making of Chăm people on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
3. The delegation of **Viet Nam** was delighted that the Chăm ethnic group in the provinces of central Viet Nam were right now celebrating the inscription of ‘Art of pottery-making of Chăm people’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List. With the consent of the prime minister of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the local authorities and the ethnic communities, Viet Nam was committed to carrying out a national programme, providing support to Chăm pottery practices to safeguard the viability of this element. The delegation thanked the Director-General of UNESCO, the Chairperson, the Evaluation Body, the Committee Members and the Secretariat for the hard work and their support of the inscription of this meaningful element.

*[A video of the element was projected]*

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the next file to be examined, explaining thatthe Committee should decide whether the nomination fulfilled the criteria for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List and the granting of International Assistance. The criteria for the International Assistance request were projected onto the screen, as well as paragraph 10 of the Operational Directives, which refers to two factors that the Committee may also consider in its evaluation. It was recalled that it was not necessary to satisfy every criterion in order for the request to be approved.
2. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage** [draft decision 7.a.4] submitted by **Albania**. Xhubleta is a handcrafted garment worn by highland women and girls in Northern Albania, characterized by its undulating bell form. Xhubleta was once used in everyday life from the age of puberty, indicating the wearer’s social and economic status. Today, few women possess the knowledge of the entire process, and traditional family-based transmission is rare. Nevertheless, the garment has maintained its social and spiritual significance and is still considered an integral part of highland identity. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria, highlighting its appreciation for a well-prepared file that can serve as a good example of a comprehensive safeguarding plan to address the viability of an element under threat and in need of urgent safeguarding. The Body greatly appreciated the file for considering the re-usability of materials and environmental sustainability in the process of safeguarding the element. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Urgent Safeguarding List. Albania also requested International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the implementation of the safeguarding plan for the element. The proposal is a two-year safeguarding programme that aims to support efforts to enhance the practice and transmission of the element in northern Albania. It has three main objectives and strong cooperation with the community concerned. The budget included a detailed description of the expenses. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body also recommended to approve the International Assistance request by the State Party.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.a.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.a.4) **adopted to inscribe Xhubleta, skills, craftsmanship and forms of usage on the Urgent Safeguarding List, and to grant International Assistance.**
4. The delegation of **Albania** expressed gratitude to the Committee on behalf of all Albanians and the Albanian Government for the decision to include the mastery and excellence of the making of Xhubleta on the list of Urgent Safeguarding List and for accepting the request for International Assistance. For Albanians, Xhubleta is not just a costume or another dress, it is a way of life. Xhubleta accompanies women from the Albanian highlands from birth to death, through joy and sorrow. In northern Albania, where women still wear this costume, you often hear them say that Xhubleta is as old as humans and, indeed, archaeologists talk about a 4,000-year-old Xhubleta costume. All this time, it has witnessed the history of the inhabitants of our lands, changing with them, while enriched with life experience and symbols that will take years to unravel. Today, everything is easy through technology. It is not difficult to make an outfit similar to Xhubleta on a production line. But the beauty of the original, as made by our mothers, is unattainable. The whole process of making a Xhubleta is a ritual in itself and includes not only the knowledge of weaving but also the knowledge of the magical formulas that women and girls whisper during the production process to make the dress beautiful and long-lasting. This beautiful tradition has been passed on from generation to generation, and stands the test of time thanks to the efforts and dedication of the local community, where it has survived to this day. Its protection and transmission to other generations has now become not only a national but also an international obligation thanks to the inclusion of Xhubleta on the Urgent Safeguarding List. From now on, it will be mandatory to set up structures to document the accurate mapping of where Xhubleta is used and made to create the right infrastructure that to enable the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation, to teach young girls, and to promote it as an extraordinary asset to Albanians and the entire Mediterranean area. Today is only the beginning of life-long work for the preservation of this heritage.
5. The **Chairperson** congratulated all the States Parties on their successful inscriptions. He informed the Committee that the Bureau had received a request from Andorra and France to examine their nomination this afternoon, which would follow the nomination by China.

**ITEM 7.b OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/7.b Rev.+Add.2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.b_Rev_Add.2-EN.docx)

*See*[*46 nominations*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7b-representative-list-01281)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the examination of sub-item 7.b and examination of nominations for inscription on the Representative List.
2. The **Secretary** informed the Committee that France and Belgium withdrew its joint nomination, Living fairground culture and showmen’s art. Grenada also withdrew its nomination file, Shakespeare Mas, a traditional component of Carnival unique to Carriacou. This meant that forty-four nominations would be examined for possible inscription on the Representative List. The criteria (R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4 and R.5) that guide the decisions under this item were projected onto the screen. The submitting States were required to demonstrate that a nominated element satisfied all five criteria.
3. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the first nomination file, **Kun Lbokator, traditional martial arts in Cambodia** [draft decision 7.b.1] submitted by **Cambodia**. The element inculcates and develops the mental and physical strength and discipline among its practitioners, involving rituals and social practices. The element is performed as part of ritual offerings to local deities at gatherings and major festivals and events. It plays a key role in strengthening respect between practitioners and their society, as well as in protecting the environment. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explains that the viability and development of the element is ensured by masters who train individuals by conducting various workshops, opening training schools and setting up an inter-provincial network to share experiences of the element. However, the Body noted that it will be important for the State Party to implement safety measures to ensure the well-being and safety of the practitioners during the practice of the element. The Evaluation recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
4. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.1) **adopted to inscribe Kun Lbokator, traditional martial arts in Cambodia on the Representative List**.
5. The **Minister of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia**, H.E. Ms Sackona Phoeurng, thanked the Committee for its decision to inscribe Kun Lbokator on the Representative List. This inscription today will go down in the history of the 2,000 years of this Khmer martial art, bringing joy and pride to the Cambodian masters, practitioners, communities and people. This decision fully rewards the efforts to safeguard all the elements in this nomination file at a level of international recognition. The delegation dedicated this inscription and paid tribute to two masters, Master Ith Pen and Master Ros Serei, who were unfortunately no longer with us today and who would not be able to celebrate the fruits of their labour. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts assured the Committee that all the recommendations set out in this decision are taken seriously in order to safeguard and promote the inscribed element and the other elements of intangible cultural heritage in Cambodia. The Ministry will continue to work closely with relevant masters, bearers, practitioners and communities, as well as other parties, to assist and create an enabling environment for Kun Lbokator to flourish.
6. The **Chairperson** congratulated the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts of Cambodia.
7. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China** [draft decision 7.b.2] submitted by **China**. China’s traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices entail the knowledge, skills and practices around tea plantation management, tealeaf picking, manual processing, drinking and sharing of tea. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explained the skills of tea processing, an intangible aspect of the element, including the value of modesty, harmony, comity and respect, as well as the benefits to the human body and mind, and presented significant and useful safeguarding measures. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
8. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 7.b.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.2) **adopted to inscribe Traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China** **on the Representative List**.
9. In a video address, the **Minister of Culture and Tourism**, H.E. Mr Hu Heping, spoke on behalf of China and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to express sincere gratitude to the Committee for the inscription of Traditional tea processing techniques and associated practices in China on the Representative List. Tea originated in China and became popular throughout the world. In China, the systematic knowledge and skills, extensive social practices, and abundant cultural connotations related to the production, processing and drinking of tea have been nurtured and passed down as an important heritage for many centuries. Tea has been at the heart of trade and cultural dialogue between China and other countries along the ancient Silk Road, the Tea Horse Road, and through the ‘Belt and Road’. China was glad to observe the International Tea Day to celebrate its cultural significance, as its aroma had made its way into the hearts of people across the world. Today, in many parts of China, local communities have greatly benefited from the transmission of traditional tea processing techniques, the promotion of tea culture, and the development of tea production, which helped eradicate poverty and sustain their livelihoods. It is a good example of how China contributes to global poverty reduction. The inscription of this element will help support the transmission of knowledge and skills of tea processing, improve intangible cultural heritage in general, and strengthen its role in social and economic sustainability and intercultural communication. The Government of China will fulfil its safeguarding commitments to transmit and promote the cultural heritage of tea. Just like drinking tea can bring people together, China looked forward to more cultural dialogue.
10. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Bear festivities in the Pyrenees** [draft decision 7.b.39] submitted by **Andorra** and **France.** This is an ancient festival associated with bears and symbolizing the relationship between people and nature. It takes place in winter and includes a set of rituals and events such as theatre, dance and music. During the event, young men dress up as bears and run through the streets trying to catch attendees. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explains well the role and responsibilities of the practitioners who are involved in the organization of the festival, the role plays, the songs and the acting, as well as the current cultural significance of this festival. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended inscription of this element on the Representative List.
11. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.39**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.39) **adopted to inscribe Bear festivities in the Pyrenees on the Representative List**.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Andorra** spoke of its pleasure to be in Rabat with the UNESCO family. On behalf of the Government and the entire population of the Principality of Andorra, Andorra thanked the Evaluation Body and the Committee for the inscription of the Bear festivities in the Pyrenees on the Representative List, presented jointly with France. This inscription, which is the second for Andorra, will help promote the practices of intangible cultural heritage of the mountains and valleys of the Pyrenees and to raise awareness among the general public of the importance of safeguarding social practices, rituals and festivals. The recognition of these celebrations, which have survived time and which serve to create spaces of complicity and exchange within the local population, highlight the richness of traditions of oral expression, framed by art performances and interpretation, and which help keep the traditional collective imagination alive.
2. The delegation of **France** thanked the Committee for its decision to inscribe Bear festivities in the Pyrenees on the Representative List. France shared the joy of the community, represented by ten of its members, who made the trip to Rabat. It is an Andorran and French community that carries this element, an element which expresses the community’s attachment to its cultural values and which also testifies to the importance of popular inter-generational manifestations. France was delighted to have been able to present this project with its common friend.
3. The **Chairperson** congratulated Andorra and France, adding that the communities that come together from around the world represented the beauty of the Convention. Through this nomination, he paid tribute to all the communities around the world from wherever they come.
4. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Ancestral system of knowledge of the four indigenous peoples, Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta** [draft decision 7.b.3] submitted by **Colombia.** The ancestral system of the four peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is comprised of sacred mandates that keep the existence of the four peoples in harmony with both the physical and spiritual universe. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explained well that the element is transmitted from generation to generation through cultural practice, community activities, the use of the indigenous language and the implementation of the sacred mandates. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.3) **adopted to inscribe Ancestral system of knowledge of the four indigenous peoples, Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on the Representative List**.
6. The delegation of **Colombia**, represented by Ms Leonor Zalabata Torres,Arhuaco and Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, thanked the Government of Morocco for organizing this great event. Mother Earth, who has the ability to produce life, has given rise to us; we are children of the earth. They created the world and indigenous peoples. We have the understanding of how to look after Mother Earth and save the world. It is necessary to recognize that ancestral knowledge is equally as valid as scientific knowledge. [Second speaker] The Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa people have the duty of caring for the world and looking after life in all of its diversity. We are one with nature, humans and beings that are part of this world and have a role to play that obeys the law of origin. Our responsibility is to transmit this knowledge to future generations. Our spiritual authorities are called into this world to establish this connection with the world, which means that we are one with nature. [Third speaker] Recognition and protection of this system of ancestral knowledge is part of the Government’s commitment, and this knowledge has been incorporated into its strategy for combatting climate change. The ethical, political and spiritual duty to look after the Earth highlights the importance of culture in mitigating climate change and achieving peace. [Fourth speaker] The Magdalena territorial authorities lent their support to the Sierras people in their quest to continue transmitting this ancestral knowledge. The communities are working towards social change, with the ultimate goal of creating a fairer world and using agricultural practices that are respectful of nature and that work in harmony with Mother Earth. He invited the delegates to attend an event to be held later during the week.
7. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Festivity of Saint Tryphon and the Kolo (chain dance) of Saint Tryphon, traditions of Croats from Boka Kotorska (Bay of Kotor) who live in the Republic of Croatia** [draft decision 7.b.4] submitted by **Croatia**. The element involves a religious recital to Saint Tryphon, as well as a chain dance performed afterwards. It is practised during February and March each year. The bearers are Boka Croats, who gather in confraternities. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explains the social and cultural function of the element and provides information on the proposed safeguarding measures, which includes financial support, education and promoting the element through the media. The Body noted that it will be important for the State Party to share their safeguarding experience with other States Parties with similar elements. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
8. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.4) **adopted to inscribe Festivity of Saint Tryphon and the Kolo (chain dance) of Saint Tryphon, traditions of Croats from Boka Kotorska (Bay of Kotor) who live in the Republic of Croatia** **on the Representative List**.
9. The delegation of **Croatia** thanked the Chairperson for his wise chairing and for the warm hospitality in Morocco.
10. In a video address, the **Minister of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia**, H.E. Ms Nina Obuljen Koržinek, greeted the Committee, members of the Culture Sector as well as representatives of all Member States. It was an exceptional honour to share the joy of the inscription on the Representative List of the Festivity of Saint Tryphon and the Kolo (chain dance) of Saint Tryphon, traditions of Croats from the Bay of Kotor who live in the Republic of Croatia. The element is part of the cultural heritage of the Croats of Boka, also known as ‘Boka’. They brought their heritage with them when they immigrated from Boka Kotorska. The tradition of the Boka Navy, a historical fraternity of sailors and guild associations originating in the Bay of Kotor, is an inseparable part of the identity, history, culture and tradition of Croats from the Bay of Kotor. The Croatian people were pivotal in the creation and preservation of the Boka Navy and its cultural traditions, the traditions of the St Tryphon. Every year the Boka Navy and various Croatian cities come together to celebrate St Tryphon in the squares and streets. The bearers, who have already promoted this tradition with this inscription, will likely involve even more of the new generation who will pass on the significance of this exceptional intangible cultural heritage to future generations. She thanked everyone for their cooperation, and regretted that she was unable to be in Morocco, congratulating all the other States Parties that had successfully completed the processes of inscription and that strive to preserve their intangible cultural heritage.
11. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** turned to the next nomination, **Knowledge of the light rum masters** [draft decision 7.b.5] submitted by **Cuba**. The knowledge of light rum masters is a set of traditional, scientific, sensory and innovative knowledge and techniques that ensure the safeguarding of Cuban light rum manufacturing based on continuous mixture processes and successive natural aging. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.4 and R.5 were met but that the information provided in the file was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.1, R.2 and R.3 were satisfied. The Body noted that the file focused on light rum as a product and there was insufficient explanation on the element’s social functions and cultural meanings. In addition, the file did not provide enough information about the knowledge and skills associated with the process of making light rum. Although the file provided brief information on proposed safeguarding measures, they were mainly related to the promotion of light rum as a product, to regulate and control commercial rights concerning light rum for producers, to regulate rum production processes, and to restrict access to new producers in the event of inscription on the Representative List. For this reason, the Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting State.
12. The **Chairperson** thanked the Evaluation Body, noting that an amendment had been submitted by Brazil and supported by Angola, Ethiopia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Viet Nam and Burkina Faso. Brazil was invited to present its amendment.
13. The delegation of **Brazil** was grateful to Cuba for proposing to inscribe an element linked to the centuries-old tradition associated with the art of transmitting a set of traditional, scientific, sensory and innovative knowledge through oral expressions. The file is an unusual but very important part of intangible cultural heritage, thereby contributing to more diversity on the Representative List. Indeed, it had been uncommon in the GRULAC region to submit files associated with this domain of intangible cultural heritage. However, the national inventory reflects the original potential of elements related to agribusiness. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its recommendation to the Committee and to the States Parties. The perception of those experts is a good starting point for discussion within the Committee. According to the nomination file and the information provided by the State concerned, the knowledge of the masters of Cuban light rum constitutes a social practice within the manufacturing spaces and rituals linked to the art of transmitting knowledge associated with nature and the climate owing to the direct impact on the process of selection, branding and ageing of the spirits. Following the arguments previously mentioned by GRULAC on the reasons for opening the debate, the delegation asked Cuba to clarify the nature, social functions and cultural meaning of the element, as well as the persons considered to be the cultural bearers of this cultural practice.
14. The **Chairperson** invited Cuba to respond to the question posed by Brazil.
15. The delegation of **Cuba** explained that the art of transmission of knowledge of the light rum masters is essentially a body, sensory and oral language to transmit a scientific tradition and sensory knowledge and transmission techniques to future generations. The practices for transmission are done on a daily basis in an ongoing way in the manufacturing spaces and places where masters work, who are the community of bearers. When it comes to social functions and practices, it is this process of transmission which brings together all the natural elements, which is reflected in Article 2 of the Convention. Referring to section 3 of the nomination file, it clearly explained that the nomination corresponds to the art of transmission, which is its social function, the main focus of the file, and not the production *per se.* On page 3, paragraph 1, the importance of transmission is discussed. This social function is part and parcel of the training of new masters in the centuries-old tradition. Since 1793, sugar cane has been an important part of Cuba’s economy. In every aspect of society, sugar cane has played a role, which is why these light rum masters (in the family and manufacturing contexts) held such a vital role. The apprentice-master relationship is also central to this understanding. The file does not describe a recipe for making rum, rather it presents the social function of this transmission, the way people were collectively and in solidarity putting their knowledge and practices to use and transmitting values from generation to generation. It was not about promoting a product or a brand. These are shared values covering generations, and the historical aspects of transmission were manifested in the basic values of light rum. Cuba’s history cannot be understood without appreciating this kind of transmission of knowledge, the way the masters develop their own way of transmitting their knowledge and expertise. This social function is central to the nomination and represents an integral part of Cuban society. Responding to the two questions on the nature of the element in terms of its social function, the delegation reiterated that the nomination concerned the safeguarding of the actual transmission of the element, clarifying that this oral transmission cannot be learned through a university course, for example, but in the heart of the community. This master-apprentice relationship is the space where this knowledge is transmitted. The communities in which the apprentices and masters are operating are thus part of society. It is not something that is separate from society. It forms an integral part of Cuban society in communities where light rum is produced and is closely connected to the history of Cuban culture.
16. The delegation of **India** noted that this was one of the most important discussions faced by this Convention, one that concerned aspirations versus technicalities. The last statement made by Cuba affirmed that this nomination is closely related to the history of Cuban culture and its people, which the delegation saluted. Cuba had furthered its case and it was now for the Committee to decide. The delegation noted the aspirations of a developing country with a low per capita income trying to establish its cultural heritage faced with the technicalities of today’s modern world. The Committee was at a pivotal moment. Based on the explanation by the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body on the issue of criterion R.2, it was noted (and it was unjust in this particular nomination) that multiple nominations in the past faced recurring difficulties with the R.2 criterion. It was also noted that the Evaluation Body did not *refer* or reject any file solely on the basis of this criterion. Further, the Body took note of the discussions of the global reflection of the listing mechanisms. According to the information presented by Cuba in the nomination file, knowledge of the light rum masters would contribute to ensuring its preservation and the recognition of the value of intangible cultural heritage associated with the oral transmission of this traditional knowledge. The historical, cultural and symbolic values it holds for communities are in keeping with the values of harmony with the environment, eco-culture and sustainable development. In addition to this information, the delegation asked Cuba to further elaborate on other aspects on how the inscription of this element could contribute to the objectives of this Convention.
17. The delegation of **Cuba** thanked India for the kind words directed towards Cuba and its people, and for emphasizing a very important aspect on how the communities view their cultural heritage and how it could raise the visibility of intangible cultural heritage in general. The biggest contribution would be UNESCO’s recognition that a centuries-old tradition promotes traditional, scientific and sensory knowledge and its transmission. It was recalled that this element had not been displaced by modern technology and that it was robust despite the policies of the blockade and the adversities it had faced. It is a long-standing tradition comprising ancestral knowledge, which came about from the arrival of the sugarcane industry in Cuba in 1872 and the start of rum production and distillation. This element would thus also raise awareness on this aspect. The nomination file clearly described the link between intangible cultural heritage, its relationship to nature, its industrial history and tangible cultural heritage. Many of the manufacturing spaces are actually localities that have over time become national monuments. This would allow for a more integrated way of approaching these industrial and heritage aspects. This would foster greater synergy between this Convention and other culture Conventions of UNESCO. Because of this intergenerational transmission, the cultural aspects of this agroindustry will actually become more visible, beyond the product itself. The bearers are not only holders of knowledge, they also represent Cuban culture. Indeed, rum is the liquid flavour of Cuba and is part and parcel of this transmission. The delegation also believed that this nomination would foster interaction between the various different communities that make up Cuban society—a transculturation with the transmission fostering dialogue and human creativity. This is an element that also promotes inter-generational dialogue and cohesion. Page 6 of the nomination clearly spelled out these aspects of how inscription of this element would raise awareness through its oral and inter-generational transmission that not only concerned the production of light rum, but was an integral part of Cuban history and culture.
18. The delegation of **Ethiopia** was satisfied with the information provided by Cuba on the aspects related to how the inscription of this element could contribute to the visibility of intangible cultural heritage in general. This would make it possible to preserve and recognize the value of intangible cultural heritage associated with the transmission of traditional knowledge related to handicrafts and manufacturing processes of natural products, which has historical, cultural and symbolic values for the communities in harmony with the environment, eco-culture and sustainable development. It would also raise awareness of the importance of a centuries-old tradition based on the value of oral, corporal and sensorial transmission of knowledge and practices of intangible cultural heritage. This knowledge is the result of human creativity and has not been replaced or substituted by technology. The inscription would therefore encourage the transmission of practices that foster a better relationship between communities, thereby promoting intercultural and inter-generational dialogue. The inscription of this element would highlight the diversity of not only Cuban but also of Caribbean intangible cultural heritage at the international level, as well as its connection with other areas and expressions of heritage, such as traditional and popular festivals, culinary traditions, and musical and dance manifestations. In conclusion, it would facilitate a better interaction between the different types of heritage, such as intangible, natural and industrial heritage. This promotes an integral management of all these forms of heritage, favouring sustainable development based on culture.
19. The delegation of **Panama** was also satisfied with the answers given by Cuba and, from a technical point of view, highlighted the fact that artisanal products, whether pottery or any kind of product for consumption, often led to simplification and sacrificing communities due to the fear of inscribing an element that is deemed to promote commercialization. In this case, it was clear that there is a chain of knowledge, from sowing seeds to the production of rum. Indeed, the rum masters symbolized this chain of knowledge. The delegation congratulated the Cuban people for this element, adding that it was time to open spaces for dialogue between masters from the different communities and evaluation experts so as to really understand and reflect on how to improve these kinds of nomination files related to artisanal products, whether for consumption or practice. The Committee has to look beyond the product and see the value it gives to the community in consuming it. It cannot sacrifice the element, which is first and foremost, a tradition, with a community practising, valuing and sharing it, and which represents their identity.
20. The delegation of **Angola** thanked the Evaluation Body for its report and welcomed the information provided by Cuba. It returned to the previous point on the importance of dialogue. Opening up the dialogue process would have provided a chance to better understand the element in that it was not about the rum *per se* but about the knowledge of the art of producing the light rum. As intangible culture, oral transmission is one of the ways of transmitting knowledge, which is clearly seen in this process of inter-generational transmission. This transmission is important, otherwise there is a risk of losing this centuries-old culture, a culture worth safeguarding and an integral part of the identity of the people of Cuba.
21. The delegation of **Czechia** was happy to note the dedication and excitement of the Cuban delegation and the Committee Members for this nomination. The delegation had studied the file with great interest and appreciated the community spirit and significance of the knowledge of the light rum masters and the manufacturing process, as well as its high profile as very important symbols of rum culture. From experience, the delegation knew how difficult it is sometimes to draft the nomination file in such a way that all questions are answered, and that the essence of the element, the safeguarding strategy and the role of communities are comprehensively and comprehensibly described to people of different cultural backgrounds. However, it regretted that it did not find the presentation of the element satisfactory nor was it convinced by the explanations provided. The main issue lay in the very definition of the element, which is not factual enough to fully understand the element being nominated. The word ‘transmission’ was mentioned several times, but it was unclear what was being transmitted. *What kind of knowledge? What kind of know-how?* It was explained that it comprised the knowledge of the light rum masters, but it was still unclear as to what this knowledge consisted of, especially for people outside this tradition. In addition, the delegation sought a clear explanation about the interconnectedness of the rum masters with the rest of the rum-making community, and especially about the roles their know-how plays from the perspective of Cuban society in general. Another issue concerned the absence of information concerning the participation of the community in planning, especially in the implementation of the safeguarding measures, which is crucial for successful safeguarding. Even section 4 was silent about this part of the drafting process. The delegation believed that an element with such potential and a dedicated community of practitioners deserved a much better presentation, and strongly encouraged Cuba to use this opportunity to revise the file, completing all the missing information and providing a good-quality translation, as well as re-submitting a new version that will adequately represent what the community and drafters had intended. The delegation asked the Body to explain why it did not use the dialogue option in this case and why it was considered to be insufficient to resolve the problems of this file.
22. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** reminded the Committee that the Body does not evaluate the element itself. In every case, it only evaluates the information provided in the file by the State Party. The Body cannot base its evaluation on personal knowledge or external information. It has to evaluate the information provided by the State. The evaluation is not related to the element, but to the information provided by the State. In this case, it was not possible to use the dialogue option because the dialogue process was established only to answer a specific question that required a specific answer, as stipulated in paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives. The dialogue option is used when the Body thinks that there is a specific issue in the file that the Body can clarify by asking a specific question to the State Party. But it cannot use the dialogue option for giving the State Party the opportunity to add more information or rewrite the file. In this particular case, the Body found a number of important issues that were impossible to resolve with a specific question and which were related to the definition of the element and to the safeguarding measures.
23. The delegation of **Botswana** was happy with the explanation provided by the Cuban delegation and the amendments proposed by Brazil and supported by the countries listed as co-sponsors. It wished to add its name to the list of co-sponsors.
24. The delegation of **Viet Nam** expressed satisfaction with the information provided by Cuba on the aspect related to how the inscription of this element could contribute to the visibility of intangible cultural heritage. It would raise awareness of the importance of the knowledge of light rum masters, a centuries-old tradition. This knowledge is the result of human creativity and has not been replaced or substituted by technology. Viet Nam therefore supported the inscription of the file.
25. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked Cuba for its detailed complementary explanation. As a new Member of the Committee, it was a little confused, as the main question concerned the effectiveness and consistency of the decision-making process by this Committee. The process had so far been consistent thanks to the existence of the working agreement. This had been respected in the past five years, as out of twenty-three files with three or more criteria not met, none of the nomination files had been inscribed. This was key to ensuring the credibility and effectiveness of the Committee. The delegation considered that the proper and clear description of the element in the file is both very important and crucial for the understanding of the element by the widest public. To paraphrase the words of Bangladesh, “every intangible cultural heritage counts because every community counts”. The delegation believed that it is exactly for the communities and their precious intangible cultural heritage that they deserve a comprehensive, clear description in the file and on UNESCO’s webpage, as well as all the corresponding online tools contributing to raising awareness of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
26. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked Cuba for its explanation, which clarified issues in reference to criterion R.2. Saudi Arabia also believed that the file would raise awareness of the importance of centuries-old traditions, which are based on oral, corporeal and sensorial values of knowledge transmission, as well as the practices as vehicles of intangible heritage, encouraging the transmission that takes place in factories to foster a better relationship among communities, and promoting intercultural and inter-generational dialogue.
27. The delegation of **Morocco** returned to its earlier intervention during the examination of the report of the Evaluation Body with regard to the balance of inscriptions between the different regions of the world and the visibility of intangible culture on a global scale. For this element, relating to the know-how of the masters of light rum, the delegation believed that the Cuba had provided sufficient explanations and arguments to facilitate the discussion, and it agreed with the favourable opinions of several Members. For this reason, it favoured the inscription of this element, which has a social importance for the Cuban communities concerned. Morocco also co-sponsored the amendment by Brazil.
28. The delegation of **Peru** believed that the explanations provided by Cuba were sufficient. It highlighted the huge complexity when it comes to evaluating files about products. This differs greatly when compared to expressions such as dance and music, which perhaps are easier to identify within the universe of intangible cultural heritage. Nevertheless, given the complexity of these elements, the delegation believed it was necessary to look beyond the end product to see what supports these expressions and, in the case of Cuban rum, its social and cultural meaning, whose transmission within the bearer community was clearly evident. For this reason, it believed that criterion R.2 was met because the element delved further into the knowledge and the social and cultural characteristics related to intangible cultural heritage—in particular, that artisanal products are not only end products, they have everything to do with the identity of the people.
29. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** confirmed its support of the amendment.
30. The **Chairperson** moved to close the debate for the day, recalling that the Bureau meeting would commence at 9 a.m. the following morning and was open to Observers.
31. The **Secretary** reminded States that wished to hold performances or present audiovisual material to inform the Secretariat in order to facilitate their preparation. He also recalled a number of planned several side events taking place.
32. The **Chairperson** adjourned the day’s session.

*[Wednesday, 30 November, morning session]*

**ITEM 7.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 delegations, recalling that the Committee had successfully concluded items 6.c and 6.d. For item 7, there was an initial debate on the report of the Evaluation Body, after which draft decisions in 7.a were adopted. The Committee finished its work up to item 7.b.5 and would resume its examination of draft decision 7.b.5. There was a reshuffle of files for examination requested by a number of States Parties, which the Chairperson would try to accommodate. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that amendments had been received for draft decisions concerning nominations submitted by Egypt, Germany, Guatemala, Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Romania, and the Republic of Moldova. There was also an amendment from Brazil for the overall draft decision 17.COM 7. The Chairperson resumed the examination of draft decision 7.b.5 and Cuba’s nomination file.
2. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** was satisfied by the intervention made by Cuba. However, it wondered about the deciding factors of the upstream dialogue process. The delegation understood that the Evaluation Body worked in strict compliance with the instructions relating to the dialogue process. In the case of the Cuba file, it was found that the information therein was sufficient for the Body to evaluate it [with a referral] and therefore deemed it unnecessary to dialogue with the submitting State. However, the clarification provided by Cuba following the question from Brazil had shed light on the file. Contrary to appearances, this file is more about transmitting the know-how of rum masters than promoting the product, whose know-how impacts the lives of Cubans on a daily basis. The Committee should encourage respect for the intangible cultural heritage of all communities. While thanking the Evaluation Body for its expertise, the Committee must be able to take such clarifications into account in the future, while also reflecting on the idea of systematically engaging dialogue at the slightest suspicion of misunderstanding of a file which could lead to its referral.
3. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** welcomed the submission by Cuba and thanked the Evaluation Body for its hard work. Discussions by many Members of the Committee clearly demonstrated an interest in the file, which highlighted its contribution to the socio-economic development of communities involved in the production, dissemination and transmission of the knowledge of the light rum masters. There also appeared to have been problems with translation, the absence of the dialogue process, and other factors that stood in the way in understanding this element, with which the Cuban people identify. The discussions also revealed that this nomination serves to transfer knowledge between generations. Given the viable arguments put forward by many Members of the Committee, together with the answers provided by Cuba, Uzbekistan co-sponsored the amendment proposed by Brazil and therefore supported the inscription of the element.
4. The delegation of **Bangladesh** commended the Evaluation Body for its hard work in analysing all the files. However, it encouraged the Body to refer to the Operational Directives as frequently as possible for clarification purposes. In the case of Cuba, the delegation found that the element qualified as intangible cultural heritage. However, there could have been technicalities for which the Evaluation Body had submitted its observations. But given the explanations provided by Cuba, the delegation was convinced that this file deserved consideration and support, and that the knowledge of the rum masters qualified as intangible cultural heritage and thus its inscription.
5. The delegation of **Switzerland** had no doubt of the heritage value of this element nor the manifest commitment of Cuba. However, the Committee was not asked to decide whether or not it was for or against light rum. Its task was to evaluate a file, which was not proposed for rejection, and to discuss the merits of the file. The Body, whose members were chosen and renewed by the Committee on the basis of criteria and rules that the Committee itself had established, had provided its evaluation. The Evaluation Body concluded that only two of the five criteria were met. In fact, the Body proposed that Cuba review its file to better establish the safeguarding of this element. The ultimate mandate of the Committee is to ensure that this magnificent heritage in Cuba can be safeguarded as best as possible. *Where is the problem in reworking a file to achieve this?* Again, a referral is not a failure. It is an opportunity to improve the file. The delegation was not in favour of the amendments proposed and supported following the recommendation of the Evaluation Body.
6. The delegation of **Paraguay** was satisfied with the explanation given by Cuba, which clarified any doubts. It was very sensitive to the importance of oral transmission. The Evaluation Body looked at documents, whereas cultural expressions are living expressions that pass on emotion. These emotions can sometimes be felt in audiovisual materials when they are well done, and the materials can be a faithful reproduction of the spirit of the proposed cultural element. The delegation also believed that when looking at documents and when asking a country to present them, the Committee is perhaps lacking the understanding about what it means for a country to present a nomination file, involving communities who are not experts and who are just living their heritage. Indeed, these processes seem very cold. The nomination process involves a huge effort from the countries concerned that do not necessarily have the resources, in a region where there is underinvestment. For the delegation, Cuba’s presentation was very clear. It recognized the value of the intangible cultural heritage linked to this knowledge and craft involving the production of a natural product with all its historic and symbolic value and links with the environment.
7. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its presentation and the Members of the Committee for an interesting discussion. It shared the concerns raised by Czechia and others regarding the amendments. The Committee had a working agreement that it should honour. The Evaluation Body had made a thorough evaluation of the file and found the information insufficient, and therefore the nomination should be referred. This was not an evaluation of the element itself. The delegation thanked Cuba for the excellent presentation and looked forward to examining the file with the missing information in a future session.
8. The delegation of **Brazil** clarified that the information used to propose the amendment came from the file itself and it was happy to share its experts’ report with the Body or any Members of the Committee. Brazil expressed satisfaction with the information provided by Cuba on criteria R.1 and R.2. With regard to criterion R.3, the delegation noted that the file presented a number of proposals aimed at educational actions in society, as well as a system to maintain the systematic participation of the masters in events and training courses to give visibility to the cultural practice, while disseminating the means associated with Cuban rum. As pointed out by the Evaluation Body, many measures aim to improve trade regulations. The delegation believed that this ensured that technical documents integrated the traditional knowledge of rum masters. It also noted the concerns presented in the safeguarding measures concerning the use of the images of the masters, as well as the desire that the masters accompany the development plans of new products “ensuring that the development of the products aimed at expanding the markets is not carried out behind the backs of the members of the community”. Given that criterion R.3 has a temporary nature, the delegation asked the submitting State to provide more details on the safeguarding measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the element.
9. The delegation of **Cuba** thanked and took note of all the recommendations made by the Members of the Committee, thanking Brazil for the question. Obviously, criterion R.3 is extremely important not only for the element but also because safeguarding embodies the essence of the Convention. In the file, section 3(i) includes the measures established by the bearers in order to protect the element, considered the most important safeguarding action. Section 3(i) demonstrates that the file concerns the art of transmission, as all the measures reflected therein make reference to the actions of the masters and the bearer communities to safeguard and transmit the element. The measures in this regard refer to the selection of people, the training of future masters, and all the procedures concerning their training. The measures taken by the State are outlined in section 3(i), page 7, as well as section 3(ii). However, the delegation remarked that the Committee should reflect on the space allocated in the form, as it was unable to include all the measures considered by the State and the bearer communities. In the second part of this criterion, the delegation commented on the measures taken by the State to protect this extremely vulnerable form of oral transmission, passed down from generation to generation, from a legal and legislative standpoint, and because nothing is written down. The measures are complemented by the approval of a new national law on heritage adopted in May 2022, which establishes new systems for intangible cultural heritage inventories and safeguarding measures with regard to new elements. As to section 3(iii), which raised concerns among members of the Evaluation Body, the measures that have commercial impact intend to protect the processes of the masters. They have to be able to carry out the transmission process. Light rum masters do not hold any rum trademark, nor do they market their product. Some elements of the conclusions had affected the bearers, as it suggested that the communities were consumers or producers. The element is not about marketing or manufacturing, it is about know-how. There is a system of laws established and rules to protect and recognize the know-how of light rum masters as an integral part of this system, which can obviously affect marketing. However, the idea is not to place the master as a figure within that marketing process, even though these challenges exist when it comes to safeguarding the product.
10. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** remarked that it had examined the elements presented by the Evaluation Body and the explanations by Cuba, and noted that the file was not subject to dialogue. The file was also examined solely on the basis of the elements contained in the file. The delegation further remarked that the Evaluation Body had comprehensible, objective limits in the selection of dialogue cases, which was not based on the competence of its members but at the level of the definition of the modalities of dialogue in terms of the criteria themselves. Based on this observation, Burkina Faso recognized that Cuba had provided the clarifications to criterion R.1 that removed any doubt on the qualification of the element as intangible cultural heritage, which indeed comprised the know-how of the masters of light rum. Moreover, as one State Party pointed out, *what threshold should be placed on the tangible and intangible aspects of an element when the two are very often related, especially in the present case?* The amendment therefore helped better understand the enthusiasm that the inscription could generate around ancestral knowledge and, therefore, around awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general. Lastly, the organization and status of the masters of rum, with the help of the Government, elevated the element, which explained the implementation of safeguarding measures. Consequently, the delegation supported the inscription of the knowledge of the masters of light rum.
11. The delegation of **India** asked the Secretariat to project the draft amendments on the screen.
12. The delegation of **Mauritania** had listened to the concise explanations provided by Cuba and believed that the arguments presented clarified the problems relating to the translation of the official version of the nomination file, as well as the identification and understanding of the element in question. Mauritania therefore supported and co-sponsored the amendment submitted by Brazil. Mauritania always respects cultural diversity, customs and traditions of peoples to improve dialogue without borders between civilizations and cultures.
13. The **Chairperson** added Mauritania to the list of co-sponsors.
14. The delegation of **Rwanda** was satisfied with the information provided by Cuba on R.3 concerning the safeguarding measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the element, its social function and cultural meaning. It must be recognized that the bearers of this element had been able to safeguard this element for hundreds of years, guaranteeing transmission from generation to generation. The bearers had taken a group of measures at the community level to protect the element and its transmission. According to Cuba, in the context of the general heritage law recently passed by Cuba, the elements registered in this framework are covered by new safeguarding measures that include the bearers, the State and other actors related to the element. The delegation therefore recommended inscription.
15. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** turned to the adoption of the draft decision and consideration of the amendment in paragraph 1, noting its broad active support [from Brazil, Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Viet Nam, Botswana, Morocco, Côte d’Ivoire, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and Mauritania].
16. The delegation of **India** remarked on the broad consensus on the amendment, recalling that India was the first speaker on this amendment after Brazil’s presentation. It did not wish to influence the evolution of the decision-making process but yielded to the collective wisdom of the Committee. The Committee had now expressed its view, with Members strongly supporting Cuba’s file. India thus wished to be included as a co-sponsor.
17. Noting the consensus, the **Chairperson** pronounced paragraph 1 adopted. There was an amendment to paragraph 2 under R.4, which proposed to delete the following, ‘but there was a lack of information regarding the participation of some communities, such as workers involved in the production of light rum and the wider community that consumes light rum’.
18. The delegation of **India** asked that the countries supporting the amendments be shown.
19. The **Chairperson** announced the broad active support for the amendment in paragraph 2 from Brazil, Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Viet Nam, Botswana, Morocco, Côte d’Ivoire, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Mauritania and India. Criterion R.4 was adopted, as amended. With no amendment to R.5, paragraph 2 was adopted. The Chairperson turned to the chapeau of paragraph 3 before the adoption of R.1, R.2 and R.3.
20. The delegation of **Czechia** did not support the amendments for reasons already explained. However, there was another reason that served as a reminder to the Committee in future cycles. When deficiencies are well explained and the file is good enough, then the additional explanations could be accepted and duly acknowledged in the decision amended at the present session. However, when the amendment transforms a negative evaluation of the Evaluation Body’s report to a positive one – for example, when a file is said to not contain elements and then said to contain these elements – then the purpose of the evaluation procedure and system of criteria is undermined and devalued. In 2021, the Committee had a great chance to make the evaluation procedure more flexible and the nomination procedure lighter, but it decided to retain the system as it is within the current framework. This meant that the additional information would not be reflected in the file or the decision, even though the file will serve as a public presentation of the element. The delegation believed that this was detrimental to the element and the community, which deserved to be shown in the best possible way. For this reason, it did not support this amendment, and hoped that the Committee will consider this when drafting amendments.
21. The delegation of **Sweden** agreed with Czechia. The Committee had heard so much about these wonderful traditions surrounding the light rum masters, which had not been included in the file. The file focuses on the product. Having heard Cuba’s explanations, the delegation believed strongly that the element deserved a file that reflected all the information and for the Body to see the improved file. It could not therefore support the amendment.
22. The delegation of **Switzerland** also opposed the amendment for the reasons expressed by the other Members.
23. The delegation of **Brazil** insisted that all the information used to update the draft decision could be found in the file itself. It was not bringing any new information. The questions answered by Cuba clarified some of the points that were perceived from the file.
24. The delegation of **Ethiopia** fully respected the work of the Evaluation Body, but the Committee had to take into consideration the debate. Cuba had clearly stated that the file talks about the knowledge, not the product.
25. The delegation of **India** remarked that it had based its decision on the amendments presented by Brazil, which insisted that the conditions were met, as evaluated by its experts. It asked the Secretariat to explain the Rules of Procedure on broad consensus.
26. The **Secretary** explained that the Rules of Procedure of the Committee establishes that it is the Chairperson who determines whether there is consensus in the room based on relative active support, meaning one-third of Committee Members, unless there is an opposition to the amendment, in which case the Chairperson should look for broad active support, meaning the majority of Committee Members. This is the framework in which the Convention works on the issue of decision-making concerning the report of the Evaluation Body.
27. In light of the clarifications, the delegation of **India** asked that the Chairperson recognize the broad-based consensus on this paragraph so as to move forward.
28. The delegation of **Paraguay** explained that when comparing the value of the documents with the understanding and expression of the element itself, the impression is that Members attach more importance to the technicalities of the file than to the intrinsic and evident value of the intangible cultural heritage. It is more important to support the transmission of the expertise of light rum masters. The delegation agreed that it is important to have an in-depth analysis, but it was also evident that there are some elements that clearly expressed their value as living heritage that is precious to the community. This particular intangible heritage contained all the qualities for inscription. The delegation aligned with India’s remarks.
29. The **Chairperson** agreed that the amendment had received broad active support, adding that the remarks made by Switzerland, Sweden, Slovakia and Czechia would be recorded in the summary records. The Chairperson first turned to the amended R.1 in paragraph 3, with criteria R.2 and R.3 also amended, and they were duly adopted. The chapeau of paragraph 3 was also adopted as a whole.The Chairperson turned to paragraph 4, noting that the same Members supported the amendments in this paragraph.
30. The delegation of **Switzerland** expressed the opinion that the criteria mentioned earlier had not been met and it opposed inscription.
31. The delegation of **Ethiopia** noted that the overwhelming majority of the Committee Members had reflected on their opinions based on the explanation given by Cuba. It therefore fully supported paragraph 4 as amended.
32. The delegation of **Czechia** wished to retain the text in paragraph 5, which reads, ‘Encourages the State Party, when safeguarding the element, to focus on the social and cultural functions of the element.
33. The **Secretary** asked Czechia if it still wished to keep paragraph 5 because the Committee was currently discussing paragraph 4.
34. The delegation of **Czechia** explained that it wished to retain paragraph 5, which began with, ‘Encourages the State Party, when submitting […]’. The latter part would be deleted as the element would now be inscribed, and would now read, ‘Encourages the State Party, when safeguarding the element, to focus on the social and cultural functions of the element.’
35. The **Chairperson** noted that Sweden wished to add this deleted sentence in paragraph 5 to the text of paragraph 4.
36. The delegation of **Sweden** also voiced its opposition to the inscription of the element and supported Czechia’s amendment [in the amended paragraph 5].
37. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** remarked that, since the criteria had been adopted, paragraph 4 would obviously read ‘Decides to inscribe’, adding that the additional paragraph by Czechia could be discussed after the adoption of paragraph 4.
38. The delegation of **Slovakia** supported Czechia’s proposal but was flexible to its placement.
39. The **Chairperson** asked Czechia if it would agree to have a separate paragraph.
40. The delegation of **Czechia** agreed to a separate paragraph, and confirmed that the paragraph should read, ‘Encourages the State Party, when safeguarding the element, to focus on the social and cultural functions of the element’.
41. With no further comments on paragraph 4, the **Chairperson** pronounced paragraph 4 adopted.He then turned toparagraph 5 and the proposal by Czechia.
42. The delegation of **Brazil** agreed to the split paragraph becoming a new paragraph 5.
43. The delegation of **Sweden** supported the amendment by Czechia.
44. The delegation of **Peru** believed that, in line with the explanation provided by Cuba, it was clear that the element was focused on the transmission of knowledge and not on the product. Nonetheless, it did not see an issue with the amendment explicitly stating the fact in the amendment proposed by Czechia.
45. The **Chairperson** reminded the Committee of the Rules of Procedure in that Members who do not speak on a paragraph implied support. With no further comments or objections, paragraph 5 was duly adopted. It was proposed to delete paragraph 6, which was duly adopted. With no further comments, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.5) **adopted to inscribe Knowledge of the light rum masters on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Cuba** spoke of this special and exciting moment for Cuba, thanking the Evaluation Body, the Secretariat and Committee Members for inscribing this element that is of great importance to Cuba, the nation and the community. On behalf of the Cuban people, the Government, the Ministry of Culture and all the bearer communities of the element, the delegation thanked the Committee for the inscription and for the debate, which will be important in the future for the masters. [Second speaker] For the Movement of Light Rum Masters of Cuba, he thanked the Committee on behalf of generations of rum masters. The community and all those who contributed to this inscription were extremely grateful for the work carried out by the Evaluation Body and the Committee. [Third speaker] For members of the community, it was wonderful to be in such a marvellous country and be able to display Cuba’s historic culture. It was a very emotional moment for Cuba to share these memories of earlier generations. Since the nineteenth century, they were able to create, enrich, preserve and pass on this cultural heritage to the present seventh and eighth generations of those Cuban light rum masters. Nevertheless, there were major challenges ahead in order to be faithful to this culture and transmit it so that Cuban rum masters continue to be an integral part of tradition, and the culture and history of Cuba.
2. The **Chairperson** congratulated Cuba and turned to the next nomination.
3. The **Vice-Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** turned to the next nomination file, **Pyongyang Raengmyon custom** [draft decision 7.b.6] submitted by the **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**. The element is a customary social and cultural practice related to cold noodles, which are served on various occasions. It is associated with long life, happiness, hospitality, conviviality and friendliness, and is believed to foster respect, intimacy and unity. After initiating a dialogue process on criterion R.3 related to the risk of standard procedures for human creativity, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explained that the element promotes a sense of cultural identity and continuity and contributes to social harmony and cohesion, and it provided enough information on safeguarding measures. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
4. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.6) **adopted to inscribe Pyongyang Raengmyon custom on the Representative List**.
5. The delegation of the **Democratic People’s Republic of Korea** appreciated the efforts of the Government of Morocco for holding the seventeenth session of the Committee. Pyongyang Raengmyon is a traditional food in Pyongyang. It is widely known for its savoury aroma, cool and delicious taste, as well as its association with longevity, happiness, harmony and unity. The inscription of the Pyongyang Raengmyon custom on the Representative List represented the recognition of its social function and cultural importance by the international community and will further enhance the pride of its people. The delegation expressed deep gratitude to the Evaluation Body, the Secretariat and the Committee for their efforts, which led to the inscription, while acknowledging that the dialogue process provided technical help in promoting a correct understanding of the protective measures. It emphasized the importance of the active use of this process. The fact that the Pyongyang Raengmyon custom is now a part of the Representative List could not have been done without the National Heritage Protection Policy implemented by the Government under the direct guidance of Comrade Kim Jung-un, President of State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. With the inscription of Pyongyang Raengmyon custom, the importance and diversity of intangible cultural heritage will be widely recognized, not only in the country but also internationally, as treasures of humankind. The Government encouraged more organizations to participate in heritage protection and stimulate creative initiatives in heritage practices, with an emphasis on enhancing the diversity and vitality of heritage. It reiterated thanks to all Members States, experts and the Secretariat.
6. The **Vice-Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** turned to the next nomination file, **Talchum, mask dance drama** [draft decision 7.b.22] submitted by the **Republic of Korea**. Talchum is a performing art that encompasses dance, music and theatre. An ensemble of six to ten musicians accompanies masked performers who humorously explore social issues through dramatic combinations of songs, dances, movements and dialogue. The element is manifested through the oral traditions, performing arts, social practices and rituals of its dances, music and theatre, and the traditional craftsmanship associated with crafting the masks. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria, and it highly appreciated a well-prepared file that clearly explains the social functions and cultural meanings of the element and describes ongoing efforts to address the risks of over-commercialization. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of the element on the Representative List.
7. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.22**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.22) **adopted to inscribe Talchum, mask dance drama** **on the Representative List**.
8. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** spoke as administrator of the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea of the delight that Talchum, mask dance drama in the Republic of Korea is to be inscribed on the Representative List. The delegation thanked the Committee for its strong interest and support in this outcome. As head of the government agency responsible for the preservation of Korea’s cultural heritage, he felt a heavy sense of responsibility for protecting the country’s intangible cultural heritage. The Republic of Korea will continue to cooperate with the international community and implement the Convention. The delegation expressed special thanks to the Members of the Committee and the Assistant Director-General of Culture and his team for their support during this long process. Lastly, it expressed deep appreciation for the warm Moroccan hospitality.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Vice-Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** turned to the next nomination file, **Furyu-odori, ritual dances imbued with people’s hopes and prayers** [draft decision 7.b.18] submitted by **Japan**. Furyu-odori in Japan refers to various ritual folk dances, characterized by elaborate costumes accompanied by songs, gong-ringing and drumbeating. These local dances have been performed for centuries, primarily in rural areas. With life in these areas often affected by severe climate events, local communities created ritualistic performances to express their hopes for a tranquil life. The present nomination is the ‘inscription on an extended basis’ at the national level, which incorporates and replaces ‘Chakkirako’ inscribed on the Representative List in 2009. The Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and highly appreciated a well-prepared file that ensured wide participation of the communities concerned in the safeguarding of the element. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.18**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.18) **adopted to inscribe Furyu-odori, ritual dances imbued with people’s hopes and prayers** **on the Representative List**.
3. The delegation of **Japan**spoke of the great honour and pleasure to express gratitude for the inscription of Furyu-odori on the Representative List on behalf of the Government of Japan and all the communities concerned. Furyu-odori represents forty-one local dances, each of which has its own practising community, distinct from other communities and with great variety in itself. Most of these ritual dances have been practised by quite small communities across Japan. Now that these dances are recognized as heritage of world significance, it will encourage the community members of each of the forty-one dances to preserve their intangible cultural heritage. After all, the real value of this intangible cultural heritage system is to encourage local communities to transmit their heritage to the next generation.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** congratulated Japan and turned to the next nomination presented by Egypt, noting that Saudi Arabia had proposed an amendment.
2. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body**turned to the next nomination file, **Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt** [draft decision 7.b.7] submitted by **Egypt**. The festivals relate to the Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt and commemorate the Holy Family’s voyage from Bethlehem to Egypt to escape King Herod’s oppression. Every year, the event is memorialized by two festivals in which Egyptians, including Muslims and Coptic Christians of all ages and genders, participate in large numbers. The Evaluation Body considered criteria R.1, R.2, R.4 and R.5 met, but the information provided was not sufficient to determine whether criterion R.3 is satisfied. The file explained the social and cultural functions of the element and how it is transmitted. However, the safeguarding measures proposed focused heavily on increasing the number of visitors and the number of service providers, especially restaurants and souvenir stores, and does not focus on the viability and transmission of the element. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting State.
3. The **Chairperson** invitedSaudi Arabia to present its amendment.
4. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** explained that the Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt is a living heritage element practised by bearers irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity and, most importantly, from both Muslim and Christian faiths, emphasizing social cohesion and enhancing dialogue and harmony in the community. At a time when the world is witnessing growing tensions and conflicts, this element is considered a message of peace and social harmony. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for indicating in its assessment that this nomination fulfils four criteria. However, it recommended referring the file as it considered that the information provided in criterion R.3, regarding the safeguarding of the element, was not sufficient to allow the Committee to determine whether this criterion is satisfied. It was noted that the nomination file did not benefit from the dialogue process, which eleven other files had received during the same evaluation cycle; the clarified information for nine of them subsequently led those elements to be proposed for inscription. Based on the clarifications provided by Egypt in a dialogue with Saudi Arabia, the delegation proposed an amendment to the draft decision, co-sponsored by eighteen Members of the Committee. The delegation asked the Committee to endorse the amendment and inscribe the element.
5. The **Chairperson** projected the draft decision on the screen, proposing to adopt paragraph-by-paragraph. With no amendments received, paragraphs 1 and 2 were duly adopted.
6. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** read out the co-sponsors of its amendment: Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Slovakia, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.
7. The delegations of **Botswana** and **Burkina Faso** also wished to co-sponsor the amendment.
8. The delegation of **India** spoke of its great pleasure to review the file by Egypt, an ancient land of the pharaohs and pyramids. After reviewing the file and receiving clarification from the Egyptian delegation regarding criterion R.3, it found that the proposed safeguarding measures in the file ensured transmission, preservation and promotion of the element. However, the delegation invited the State Party to clarify how developing the infrastructure of celebration venues in the proposed safeguarding measures would safeguard the element and not lead to its over-commercialization.
9. The delegation of **Egypt** thanked India for the question and the Evaluation Body for its efforts in examining the nomination file, as well as the Committee for giving Egypt the opportunity to clarify the community’s participation in the design and implementation of the safeguarding plan for the element. Most of the eleven safeguarding measures in the nomination file were recommended by the communities of practitioners and bearers of the element. Developing infrastructure and essential services in the festival venues of the Holy Family Journey contributes to safeguarding the element. These measures include providing clean drinking water and food, which ensures that participants can practice the element in a safe, suitable and secure environment without hindrance, taking into consideration the growing number of practitioners and Egypt’s commitment to ensuring their safety and well-being. Meanwhile, selling artefacts as souvenirs is considered by the practitioners as a benediction from the Virgin Mary to be taken back home as a blessing. These measures do not imply over-commercialization. They in fact contribute to achieving the goals of the Convention and its Operational Directives, especially Chapter 6, paragraph 183, of the Operational Directives, which encourages States Parties to acknowledge that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage contributes to sustainable and inclusive economic development, as well as paragraph 185 that requests States Parties to recognize, promote and enhance the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to generate income and sustainable livelihoods for communities, groups and individuals. Thus, the proposed measures help improve the social and economic conditions of the local communities in the celebration venues.
10. The delegation of **Brazil** expressed satisfaction with the information provided by Egypt. In its view, the file presented very consistent information to satisfy criterion R.3 and it regretted that the Evaluation Body did not provide Egypt the opportunity for dialogue and invite the State for further clarification of the possible unintended consequences of over-tourism and an increasing number of visitors.
11. The delegation of **Egypt** clarified that the visitors to the Virgin Mary Festival, either local people or foreign visitors, are not tourists but believers who come seeking her blessing and hoping for miracles. As for monitoring the impact of increased tourism or, in this case, the number of visitors, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage from risk is the sole responsibility of the State according to the Egyptian constitution, as expressly stipulated in Article 50 of the constitution. In this regard, the State – through a number of entities, each in its field of speciality – monitors the implementation of the heritage safeguarding tools and protects the rights of its bearers. In the Ministry for Culture, for example, the Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage is responsible for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in coordination with the local communities and bearers. Moreover, the Chamber of Traditional Crafts monitors the safeguarding of crafts and ensures the safeguarding of the practice from distortion and abuse of the element.
12. The delegation of **Panama** supported this nomination and agreed with the explanation provided. These are important expressions and, depending on the country, it is important to see how visitors participate in this manifestation. The Committee should seek to ensure that there are spaces where cultural diversity can be expressed, yet it was tasked with evaluating a nomination that could have benefited from dialogue as clearly the technical aspects were presented in the file.
13. The **Chairperson** noted that the amendment proposed by Saudi Arabia had very broad support, and criterion R.3 was duly adopted as amended. The chapeau of paragraph 3 was also adopted. Paragraph 4 was also adopted as amended. Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 were adopted with no objections. With no further comments, **the Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 7.b.7**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.7) **adopted** **to inscribe Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt on the Representative List.**
14. The delegation of **Egypt** expressed sincere gratitude to the Committee for its decision to inscribe Festivals related to the Journey of the Holy family in Egypt on the Representative List. It thanked the Evaluation Body for examining this nomination file, the Secretariat for its efforts, and Morocco for hosting this session and for the generosity of its people and Government. These festivals celebrate the journey of the Holy Family when the family fled to Egypt in search of peace. It is a living heritage practised by all communities, transcending barriers between its bearers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and, most importantly, from both Muslim and Christian faiths. This element is not only important for Egypt but also for the Convention itself, as it is a message of peace based on intangible heritage, which emphasizes social cohesion and harmony in the community and promotes peace and dialogue between religions. This inscription was dedicated to all the bearers who maintain the element and had entrusted the nomination team to convey their message of peace to this Committee.
15. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body**turned to the next nomination file, **Artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread** [draft decision 7.b.8] submitted by **France**. The traditional skills associated with the baguette involve a traditional manufacturing process that includes several steps: dosing and weighing ingredients, kneading, fermentation, relaxing and manually shaping the dough, proofing, scarification (the signature of the baker) and baking. After initiating a dialogue on criterion R.3 in order to better understand whether standard production procedures for the baguette could limit human creativity, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The dossier highlights how the element generates modes of consumption and social practices that differentiate it from other breads. The file describes the participation of the communities in the application process and the creation of three scientific and support steering committees in order to advance the nomination by demonstrating broad participation of the community. The Body recommended the inscription of Artisan know-how and culture of the baguette on the Representative List.
16. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.8**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.8) **adopted to inscribe Artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread on the Representative List**.
17. The delegation of **France** remarked on the two years of a pro-baguette campaign, and it thanked the Committee for its support of the universal intangible value of the baguette.
18. The **President of the National Confederation of Bakers**, Mr Dominique Anract, spoke of his honour to represent the community of artisan bakers and defend the nomination of Artisanal know-how and culture of the baguette. This nomination process was launched in 2017 to preserve the heritage of bakers, but also for baguette lovers around the world. Two key ideas structured this file. First, the artisanal craft. A baguette has very few ingredients: flour, water, salt, and yeast or sourdough. However, every baguette is unique because the essential ingredient, the most important, is the skill of the baker. The baguette is a bread that is eaten fresh and bought every day. Bakers are often the only business open in rural areas. The baguette is a living heritage that accompanies us throughout our lives. When a baby is teething, his parents give him a piece of baguette to chew on. When a child grows up, the first errand is to buy a baguette in the bakery. For our elders, buying the half-baguette in the bakery is sometimes the only daily contact. In 1970, in France, there were 55,000 artisanal bakeries. Today, there are 35,000 left. For fifty years, the profession has lost an average of 400 bakeries a year. This is why the confederation has worked on a set of safeguards presented in the file. The preparation of the nomination represented a real collective journey, involving all the members of the family: wheat, flour, yeast, bread and beyond. It is a source of immense pride for artisan bakers. He quoted Abbé Pierre, ‘May all those who are hungry have bread, and may all those who have bread hunger for justice and love’.
19. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body**turned to the next nomination file, **Traditional equestrian games in Georgia (Tskhenburti, Isindi, Kabakhi, Marula)** [draft decision 7.b.9] submitted by **Georgia**. The element involves equestrian games that consist of four variations that strengthen inter-generational relationships, support healthy lifestyles and promote youth integration and socialization. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1, R.4 and R.5 were met but that the information provided was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.2 and R.3 were satisfied. The file explains the cultural and social functions and demonstrates the participation of the related communities in the nomination process. However, the file did not provide information on past and current efforts to safeguard the element, and it was not clear how the communities were involved in planning the proposed measures or what their role will be in their implementation. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended that the nomination be referred to the submitting State.
20. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.9) **adopted to refer Traditional equestrian games in Georgia (Tskhenburti, Isindi, Kabakhi, Marula) to the submitting State.**
21. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body**turned to the next nomination file, **Modern Dance in Germany** [draft decision 7.b.10] submitted by Germany. Modern dance is a form of physical expression distinct from classical ballet. Rather than reproducing predetermined dance positions, the dancers seek a true-to-life expression that reflects emotions and life experiences. The evaluation of this dossier was much debated. The Evaluation Body discussed several times over seven days whether the cultural and artistic expression proposed for inscription on the Representative List corresponds to the definition of intangible cultural heritage as provided in Article 2 of the Convention and, in particular, concerning the existence of a specific community to which the proposed element provides a sense of community. At the end of the discussion, the Body did not find a common position and remained split, with six members who considered that the element as presented in the file is not intangible cultural heritage, and six members who considered the file as satisfying all five criteria. All members of the Body considered that a positive evaluation of the dossier could give another interpretation of the concept of intangible cultural heritage as provided by the Convention in Article 2. For this reason, the Body considered it necessary to transmit to the Committee two decision options. One for inscription and the other for non-inscription.
22. The **Chairperson** remarked on the uniqueness of this file with two options presented to the Committee, and therefore requiring special attention. He noted that Saudi Arabia had submitted an amendment.
23. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** proposed a change to the file name from Modern dance in Germany to the Practice of modern dance in Germany to avoid the misunderstanding in the element’s nature, as it is expressed in the element as a practice and not a genre. A section of Article 2 of the Basic Text of the Convention states that “the Intangible Cultural Heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills […] that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage transmitted from generation to generation is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.” This element was therefore in harmony with the definition of intangible cultural heritage in the Convention, as it is a practice in the domain of the performing arts. Saudi Arabia therefore supported option A, to inscribe the ‘Practice of modern dance in Germany’. It asked Germany to elaborate on the community of practice and its relation to this element.
24. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Saudi Arabia for the amendment. It appreciated the work of the Evaluation Body and its honesty in admitting that it could not reach consensus. Related to the element itself, the delegation aligned with the remarks made by Saudi Arabia in that the file expresses the element as a practice and not as a genre. The change of the file name to the ‘Practice of modern dance in Germany’ sharpens the understanding of the file and avoids misunderstanding. Responding to Saudi Arabia’s question, the delegation explained that the community in Germany is clearly defined and not overly extensive. It includes around 1,000 dancers, choreographers and educators organized in several groups and associations. The associations include, among others, the Rosalia Chladek Association Germany, with about 100 members, the European Association for Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies, with approximately 200 members, the Elementary Dance association, with around 80 members, and dance studios such as Tanzraum in Wiesbaden, Tanzstudio Odenthal in Cologne or Tanzwerkstatt in Freiburg, as well as dance groups such as ArtRose and several individuals who transmit their knowledge and skills to, approximately, between 20 to 50 students per facility. The focus lies not only on individual work but on the co-creative aspect of human creativity. The delegation noted that all twelve members of the Evaluation Body agreed that criteria R.3, R.4 and R.5 were satisfied. This means that the communities concerned participated in both the safeguarding measures and the preparation of the file. This also implied that a specific intangible cultural heritage community exists.
25. The delegation of **Czechia** remarked that this recommendation by the Evaluation Body and the Committee’s decision not only affected this single nomination but also the concept of intangible cultural heritage in general. Even among its own experts, when preparing for this Committee meeting, the opinion on this inscription was mixed. To sum up the discussion, some of the Czech experts looked at the element as a dance expression based on common history, with which a concrete, though heterogenous, community identifies. Other experts felt that, although elements inscribed on the Representative List covered all kinds of traditions (vernacular, urban, royal or professional), they were generally based on a tradition passed down through many generations and reflect a concrete cultural background of individual ethnic groups and nations, whereas this element is shared by different people in one country, seemingly connected only by the principles of artistic expression. That is, they are not united by common knowledge or a set of skills but rather through their common experience, which consists of a very individual approach to working with their bodies and individual creativities. These were the two opinions in Czechia. In other words, its experts wondered whether this indeed fell under the intangible cultural heritage category of the 2003 Convention or was rather a cultural expression reflecting the principles of the 2005 Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions. For this reason, the delegation wished to hear the opinions of other Committee Members, and asked Germany to elaborate in more detail on how the community is culturally and socially interconnected. *How exactly do the practitioners identify with the social and cultural functions of the element? What is the precise cultural heritage essence they identify with?* *How is the element perceived by German society in general? What kind of social and cultural role does it play from a societal point of view?*
26. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Czechia for the very pertinent questions. With regard to the cultural functions of modern dance in Germany, the expression of cultural values is, among others, the liberation from a strict normative standard and rules of classical ballet. Classical ballet is influenced by modern dance as well, but it strictly follows certain rules that do not exist for modern dance. The second element would be the emancipation of the body. A third would be a large freedom of artistic expression following certain rules. The dancer is at the same time a choreographer and a dancer. With regard to the social functions of modern dance, groups of modern dancers in Germany have a great feeling of inclusivity, irrespective of their physical or mental condition, age or gender; anybody can join this group of dancers because there is no language. There are some rules from the teacher, but it is very inclusive to newcomers, immigrants, people with disabilities and all types of people. The element strengthens mutual respect between the practitioners because they develop their dancing practice together. This is a form of dialogue and a democratic communication process between teacher and pupil, as well as among the dancers themselves. Another social function might be the health-promoting movement of this dance. Dance programmes are a way for local communities to include all levels of society, such as in socially deprived areas.
27. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its examination of the nomination file and Germany for raising the interesting themes presented by this nomination and for answering the questions posed. It had a thorough discussion with its experts and networks. Without doubt, modern dance is an important addition to the richness and variety of intangible cultural heritage. However, the nomination file, in its current form, presents a rather broad definition of the element. Sweden asked the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat whether a referral of the nomination could be an additional option. The delegation believed the file deserved further consideration to better define and delimit the element. It supported the name change and thanked Saudi Arabia for the suggestion.
28. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** thanked Sweden for giving the opportunity to clarify the Body’s position. Normally, when there is a strong position, it is the Chairperson’s duty to try to find a compromise between the different members of the Body. In fact, the members worked several days on this file, and in the end, the Body tried to find a compromise with the referral option. However, when trying to write a draft decision for a referral, the discussion began again about the definition of the element and the role of the community. It was impossible for the Body in the end of the discussion to draft a referral decision. It would have been a technical referral, but the Body was not in a position to propose a technical referral to the Committee. Thus, it was decided that it could not propose a compromise, as its duty was to evaluate the file. The Committee gave the authority to the Body as elected members, unlike for ICOMOS or IUCN [in the 1972 Convention]. In that regard, the Body realized that the two options were the best options.
29. The delegation of **Republic of Korea** appreciated the Evaluation Body’s extraordinary effort to give due consideration to the nomination by Germany in writing two recommended options. It agreed with Czechia and other countries that this nomination tested the definition and boundaries of intangible cultural heritage. It looked forward to listening to other Members of the Committee on what intangible cultural heritage is in the twenty-first century in the global community. As for the notion of community, the delegation was satisfied by the information given by Germany. Even for the notion of community, a broader and new definition of heritage community in the twenty-first century may be needed. It believed that this element is an expression of human creativity and cultural diversity, and it celebrates the intangible cultural heritage of global society in the twenty-first century. In terms of history and whether the element is transmitted over generations, the delegation recalled that even younger elements had been inscribed on UNESCO Lists.
30. The delegation of **India** explained that it wished to see the discussion evolve on this file in the same way it did when evaluating Cuba’s file. It was impressed by the pertinent points raised by Czechia and asked that Czechia be given the floor again so that it could elaborate further regarding the future of the 2003 Convention and whether the 2005 Convention would be more appropriate for this file. It also appreciated the helpful suggestion from Saudi Arabia to change the name of the nomination.
31. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked India for its question. In fact, it had extensively debated this file among its circle of experts, which was extremely interesting in that it opened up a wider range of expressions of intangible cultural heritage. Some experts considered that this was an artistic expression that belonged to the field explored by the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which is why it raised this point.
32. The delegation of **Switzerland** examined with great interest this application file, which is technically very up to date. What seems important in relation to criterion R.1 is the level of community involvement. The delegation was of the view that the community is very explicitly defined, but more importantly, that the language and perspective used is that of a community. For the community of dancers, which is a community of practice, the element is described by the freedom of movement, and by the form of school training and transmission that is established. The element has been passed down from generation to generation. In that sense, it satisfies criterion R.1 but, above all, it meets the criterion of close community participation. In this case, it is even the community that has defined this element as intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.2, R.3 and R.4, which are based on the involvement of communities, were met. This seems to prove that there is a community and that this is an element of intangible cultural heritage. As such, Switzerland supported the amendment by Saudi Arabia as well as the element’s inscription. On this fundamental question of communities, and therefore the question of definition, the delegation invited the various Members of the Committee to express their views on the subject, as they have done on other issues, with the same passion and interest.
33. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture** thanked the Committee for the interesting debate and clarified that the 2005 Convention does not have an inscription mechanism. Indeed, three- quarters of the elements listed as intangible heritage are related to the diversity of cultural expressions, perhaps even all of them. In the Lists of the 2003 Convention, among the 600 elements inscribed, 80 are related to dance in general. The artistic expression of dance is thus present in almost 8 per cent of all inscriptions of intangible heritage elements. The discussion was therefore not substantive at the level of cultural expressions, because all the elements inscribed contribute to maintaining this diversity of cultural expressions. The discussion, as pointed out in particular by Switzerland, refers to the analysis that determines whether these elements are for inscription, referral or non-inscription. It was recalled that there were two proposed options based on the split opinion of the Evaluation Body. From the discussion, it seemed that nobody opposed the inclusion of dance. Mr Ottone believed that the change of title was fundamental, as it re-focused the element presented. However, it was important not to conflate the 2003 Convention and the 2005 Convention, even though they are indeed related. Cuba used the word ‘harmonization’ earlier and, of course, the two Conventions communicate. Regardless, the discussion between the 2003 and 2005 Conventions was unnecessary because the notion of diversity of cultural expressions is present in almost all the elements inscribed on the Lists. It was therefore up to the Committee to consider the two very clear options presented.
34. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his points for reflection, concurring with his understanding that the 2003 and 2005 Conventions are inextricably linked. After Brazil’s intervention, the Chairperson would ask the Committee whether any of its members objected to inscribe the element, noting the general trend towards inscription.
35. The delegation of **Brazil** thanked the Evaluation Body for its comments. This case stressed the importance and respect for dialogue between the Evaluation Body and the Committee. Brazil thanked Germany for presenting the file and for bringing a very interesting topic for reflection to the debate. The German nomination raised a great deal of discussion among Brazil’s experts, in line with the points raised by Czechia. The experts had pointed out some doubts. First, the file did not provide the due visibility to the community, nor a detailed description of how intergenerational transmission occurred in a manner associated with a sense of collective belonging. Their understanding is that a performance art does not have a cultural function beyond the social function commonly related to making art, such as entertainment, personal development or political activism, which should not be classified as cultural heritage. In their view, it is not enough that an activity has generations of practitioners. It is necessary that such a social practice present in the daily life of the community can serve as an instrument of reaffirmation of collective identity. For these reasons, Brazil’s cultural heritage is often associated with festivities, rituals or the transmission of oral traditions associated with collective cosmic visions. The delegation also had concerns with the recognition of movements associated with the artistic genre *per se*, with no further detail on their social or cultural functions. It understood that a perception of the collective history and memory of a very specific community may exist, but this was not totally evident in the file. However, Germany had clarified some of its doubts, especially regarding the social and cultural functions of the element, and it could therefore support the nomination. Given that the information was not evident in the file, the delegation proposed a small amendment to clarify this point. Regarding the social function, the delegation stressed that intangible cultural heritage refers to expressions that communities recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage. As the element is already recognized as intangible cultural heritage in Germany in their inventories, it remained for the Committee to understand the characteristics considered by the community in the elaboration of the file. It supported the option to inscribe.
36. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** shared the same concerns expressed in particular by Brazil and Czechia. It sought to have more detail on the character of the inter-generational transmission, as well as an explanation of the specific community that practices this dance in Germany. That is, how well defined they are, and how different they are from those of modern dance practised elsewhere.
37. The delegation of **Slovakia** had also discussed this element with experts on intangible cultural heritage and experts on modern dance, conceding that it did not have a clear answer as to whether it is intangible cultural heritage or not. The main question was whether there is clear communication during the transmission of this element, as dance also has a symbolic function with its own meanings for practitioners that are understandable to a concrete community. It asked Germany to elaborate on this aspect. Slovakia also supported the name change and thanked Saudi Arabia for this initiative. Additionally, the delegation emphasized the added value and functionality of the methodology, which was one of the strongest points of this nomination. Indeed, it can be the guarantee to ensure transmission for future generations and serve as an example of good practice in an international context. The inclusiveness and accessibility of the element to a wide range of practitioners, differentiated by age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or competence, and independent of their skill level, was highly appreciated.
38. The delegation of **Ethiopia** noted that this file had raised concern as to whether a defined community exists or not. It would therefore be good to adopt a broader meaning of community in the sense that it is not always or necessarily a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Rather, it could be about people sharing certain attitudes and practices, as indicated in the file, the understanding of which is important to help reach a consensus. The delegation thanked Saudi Arabia for presenting the amendment, and Germany for the explanations concerning the community, which was sufficient for Ethiopia to support inscription.
39. The delegation of **Panama** wished to ask the Evaluation Body about the communities, adding that it was not just about what was contained in the file but rather about the doubts expressed as to whether this element can be considered as intangible cultural heritage. A number of members of the Evaluation Body were against inscription and the delegation wondered why this was. This would help understand other cases in which States might nominate such a file, given that there are groups and communities of modern dancers who perform this artistic expression. The delegation had never considered modern dance as intangible cultural heritage *per se*, as it understood it to be about individual motivation. It wished to hear from the Evaluation Body in this regard before deciding.
40. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** thanked Panama for the opportunity to clarify the Body’s position. It was recalled that half of the members of the Evaluation Body had found that the criteria were not satisfied. The motivation was explained in the draft decision. The Evaluation Body was established and elected by the Committee, six of whom represent States Parties. The six other members represent non-governmental organizations. Generally speaking, the Evaluation Body does not have the authority to verify or determine whether a nominated element is intangible cultural heritage or not. In theory, the Body would like to recommend all files for inscription, but is tasked with evaluating the files, which is its duty as per the Operational Directives and the terms of reference determined by the Committee. It cannot evaluate emotion. The Body verifies the file and the description of the element and whether the file applies the definition provided by the Convention. In this case, six members said yes and six said no. Half of the members of the Body noted that the definition of the element provided in the file was very broad and generic. All members of the Body agreed that the file was very well written, but in several instances the same sentences were used in the file for other elements, which is problematic from a technical point of view. The community is very broad and not very clear for six members of the Body. *How and what form of the element was transmitted from generation to generation?* *Is modern dance intangible cultural heritage?* The Chairperson reiterated that the Body’s role was not to evaluate the element itself but rather whether the information provided is coherent with the definition of intangible heritage provided by the Convention.
41. The **Chairperson** thanked the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body. For the sake of time, the Chairperson asked the Committee whether there were any Members who strongly opposed inscription. With no voiced objections, the Chairperson proceeded with the adoption of the draft decision, including the amendment proposed by Saudi Arabia to change the name of the element to ‘The practice of modern dance in Germany’. With no comments or objections, paragraphs 1–4 were duly adopted. Option B (No) was deleted. Paragraphs 5 and 6 were also adopted.
42. The delegation of **Brazil** wished to add a new paragraph 7, which would read, ‘Recommends that the State Party emphasize the social function of the element when updating safeguarding plans in order to avoid decontextualization of the practice and to ensure the transmission of the collective memory of the community’.
43. With no objections, the **Chairperson** pronounced paragraph 7 adopted. Paragraph 8 was also adopted. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.10) **adopted to inscribe The practice of Modern Dance in Germany on the Representative List**.
44. The delegation of **Germany** was relieved and happy, thanking the Committee for the constructive spirit of the discussion, which was also new for the delegation in that the Evaluation Body did not have a solution to offer. The delegation had learned from the discussion, and it was happy with the solution that led to inscription. It particularly thanked Saudi Arabia for its constructive guidance, assuring the Committee that the modern dance community in Germany found this to be extremely important. The small community exists, and inscription will give it more visibility in Germany. To answer the question posed by Burkina Faso, of course, it is not a uniquely German element. The delegation cited the schools of expressive dance in the 1920s, even before the First World War, and Monte Verità in Switzerland, or Professor Laban from Slovakia, and Professor Chladek who was born in the Czech Republic. Modern dance comprised an array of expressions, in this case, from Central Europe, as some dancers had to leave Germany due to Nazism. It has become a movement that is not just limited to Germany. But for the community in Germany, it is very important to gain more visibility. The delegation thanked the Committee for its openness to think beyond the Convention, and how it is possible to expand this Convention. It believed that this was a first step in this direction. It is the heritage that lives and is alive, and the Convention must consider this evolution and development.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **August 15th (Dekapentavgoustos) festivities in two Highland Communities of Northern Greece: Tranos Choros (Grand Dance) in Vlasti and Syrrako Festival** [draft decision 7.b.11] submitted by **Greece**. The element and festivities are celebrated nationwide in Greece to commemorate the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. The main features of both festivals are the ritualistic dances. The festivals are a symbol of identity that enable the practitioners to retain bonds with their land of origin. They provide an opportunity for younger generations to meet, communicate and make friends, and to listen to and familiarize themselves with their ancestors’ language (Vlach). The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The Evaluation Body also highly appreciated a well-prepared and well-written file that highlights the role of intangible cultural heritage in fostering social cohesion in small rural communities that face the challenges of migration and urbanization. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.11**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.11) **adopted to inscribe August 15th (Dekapentavgoustos) festivities in two Highland Communities of Northern Greece: Tranos Choros (Grand Dance) in Vlasti and Syrrako Festival on the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Greece** spoke on behalf of the communities of bearers to thank the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their constant efforts in implementing the Convention and for the inscription of a valuable element of intangible cultural heritage in Greece. The festivities of August 15th (Dekapentavgoustos) in Syrrako and Vlasti is a crucial element for the identity of the people living in or originating from these two highland villages. The festivities bring together all the people originating from those villages back to their homeland if only for one week in August. This is crucial, particularly for Syrrako, which is facing an acute problem of depopulation. The inscription highlights the importance of preserving a sense of belonging in adverse situations, particularly valuable for migrants and displaced communities. The tenacity with which the Vlatsiotes and Syrrakiotes perform their annual festivities in their place of origin, regardless of how far from it they may reside permanently, may be a source of inspiration for all migrants, since both festivities annually renew communal bonds that would otherwise have been lost. This renewal of communal bonds and identity during the annual festivities is a shared experience in villages throughout Greece and was likely throughout south-eastern Europe, where similar depopulation trends in highland communities have been observed. The inscription of the element highlights the power of collective memory and local identities, which seem to be particularly appealing to younger generations. Human creativity in the form of music, dance and song as a group experience and conscious collective memory contributes to the dynamic reshaping of local identities. Young people in the places of their permanent residence understand the world and express themselves using age-old patterns of music and dance in an innovative way. This inscription promotes intangible cultural heritage elements as drivers and enablers of social cohesion and sustainability. Intangible cultural heritage flourished in these communities and continues today through the performative symbolic reconstruction of those two mountain communities.
4. The **Chairperson** congratulated all the submitting States, and adjourned the day’s session.

*[Wednesday, 30 November, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 7.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

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

1. The **Chairperson** resumed the evaluation of nomination files to the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Holy Week in Guatemala** [draft decision 7.b.13] submitted by **Guatemala**. The element is a religious and cultural celebration that involves processions, vigils, creation of carpets, orchards, altars, composition and interpretation of funeral marches, seasonal gastronomy, and the use of public spaces within communities. The element promotes tolerance and respect through the open and diverse participation of people from different social groups. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1 and R.4 were met, but that the information provided was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.2, R.3 and R.5 were satisfied. The file explains that the communities, groups and individuals concerned were contacted and informed of the nomination, but it did not provide details on how the community was involved in developing the safeguarding measures nor how they will be involved in their implementation. It seemed to be a top-down process. In addition, the file did not explain how, when and in which way the community concerned was involved in the inventory process. Finally, the file emphasized how inscription would “contribute to promote the country as a destination for cultural tourism”, and it seemed that the nomination process was initiated not for safeguarding the element itself but for promoting tourism in the country. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting State.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that an amendment had been received from Paraguay to inscribe this element on the Representative List.
4. The delegation of **Paraguay** recalled that the Convention states that the significance of intangible cultural heritage does not lie in the heritage itself but rather in the techniques and the wealth of traditions that are generated from generation to generation. Economic and commercial value are pertinent for minority and majority communities in States, and have the same value for developing countries and developed countries. MONDIACULT reminded everyone of the significance of the role of culture in sustainable development, peace, stability, and as a driver for resilience, inclusion and social cohesion and development, which is human-based and context-specific, and forms the basis of multiculturalism. Intangible cultural heritage is representative of communities. We learned from our forebears that when we get lost, when we are led astray, no matter the situation, it is always good to go back to the beginning, to the origin. In order to support Guatemala and present this amendment, the delegation returned to the text of the Convention. It thoroughly examined the different areas of intangible cultural heritage, as well as the observations made by the Evaluation Body. It understood that the lack of information highlighted could have been resolved with dialogue. It looked at the definition of the Holy Week in Guatemala and there are characteristics of this element that align fully with what is stated in the Convention, and the accompanying video convinced the delegation that it was important to look at this element again. Indeed, it is about the expression of the spirituality of the Guatemalan people. The Evaluation Body’s role is to help obtain an in-depth analysis of the file, which does not mean that its decision cannot be challenged, especially when the Body itself recognizes its limitations to fully evaluate intangible cultural heritage elements through documents that do not always faithfully represent every single cultural expression. The Committee’s role is to ensure that these elements are fully evaluated. The delegation thus asked the submitting State to elaborate on R.3 regarding community participation and the safeguarding plan.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked Paraguay and took the opportunity to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister for Culture of Guatemala.
6. The delegation of **Guatemala** based its response on text contained in the file. Communities, groups and individuals organize themselves in different settings in order to ensure this process is inclusive. Women, children and adults were involved in this process. They are important bearers and representatives of the Holy Week in Guatemala. The nomination was supported technically and financially by the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Concerning criterion R.3, section 3 of the nomination form described efforts to promote and transmit the arts, and the different roles of all the people involved, such as sculptors, decorators, composers and dancers as well as all those involved in traditional gastronomy. All were involved in preparing this file. Technical and economic factors were also taken into account. New ways to transmit this knowledge were looked at, and new materials and new technology were also used, which is described in the file. This process was therefore led by the communities, which also put forward their own ideas for safeguarding measures. The Government is promoting these measures and supported their implementation. Each community is involved in conceiving practices that are best suited to the communities. The transmission of this element goes from elders to youth and youth to elders in an inclusive process. There is both cross-cultural dialogue and intergenerational dialogue. With regard to extending the safeguarding plan, criteria and guidelines for safeguarding plans, they range from the definition of actions to the promotion of documentation and the analysis of expressions and practices at risk in order to better design measures for their safeguarding. Much of the dissemination of the knowledge, capacity-building and training were undertaken so that the communities are involved in these measures, as carried out throughout the country.
7. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked the Deputy Minister for Culture and Sports of Guatemala, adding that it was satisfied with the response provided.
8. The delegation of **Angola** thanked the Evaluation Body for its comments. It also expressed satisfaction with the clarification made by Guatemala, adding that it is always good to hear all sides involved, including the delegation of the submitting State. It wished to pose a question to Guatemala related to criterion R.2. *How will the inscription increase the visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general?*
9. The delegation of **Guatemala** explained that Holy Week in Guatemala is a manifestation of diverse culture. It is present in the twenty-two provinces of the country. The twenty-five different cultures of Guatemala participate and involve all sectors of society and over 50 per cent of the population. It is a manifestation that reinforces national, local and regional identities, while enhancing a sense of belonging and pride. Its recognition as intangible cultural heritage would strengthen the visibility of these manifestations that have links with indigenous peoples in Guatemala. The wealth of the syncretism that is present, with language as a vehicle of transmission, the use of art, rituals and all the craft techniques, music and so on, are all part of this expression. Recognition as intangible cultural heritage would enable the element, at an international level, to present an opportunity for other States to put forward diverse cultural manifestations. This would promote positive dialogue and exchange, which would in turn promote cultural diversity and dialogue between cultural groups. Guatemala spoke of the voluntary plan called ‘Guardians of Heritage’. This programme strengthens the capacities of bearer communities and promotes the capacity of those involved in Holy Week.
10. The delegation of **India** acknowledged and welcomed the presence of the Foreign Minister, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Guatemala, and the Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports. It congratulated the Guatemalan people and the Government of Guatemala for having presented this intangible cultural heritage nomination for evaluation. The delegation had a question about criterion R.5. It was indicated that the element is registered in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Descriptive Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is maintained by the Technical Directorate of Intangible Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Sports of Guatemala. Likewise, the file explains that the inventory is in constant evolution and that it is updated regularly. However, it did not specify how often it is updated. For this reason, the delegation sought to hear from Guatemala on this point. *How often is the inventory of Guatemala’s intangible cultural heritage updated?* *What is the updating process of the inventory? How do the communities in Guatemala participate in it?*
11. The delegation of **Guatemala** further explained that the inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Guatemala is updated frequently and in a periodical format, as stated in the file, specifically every two years. This is a process that takes place with the participation of the communities, with technical and financial support from the Ministry of Culture and Sports for the communities, groups and individuals who take part in the process. This is an important aspect of their participation. As was also indicated in section 5 of the file, there are women participating as well as men, and they take a proactive role. The ‘penitents’ and crafts folk and other members of the processions are all given due consultation. They therefore have direct input into the safeguarding plan, and their participation through representatives, together with the financial and technical support, means that they are clearly involved in the updating process. The National Inventory updating is also being rolled out on the basis of Guatemala’s volunteer programme and is currently being broadened to include other aspects of intangible cultural heritage from around the country. The country has a network of community cultural centres under the auspices of the Ministry, and there is one in each of the country’s departments. The technical aspects of the evaluation, updating and inventorying of intangible cultural heritage in each community is therefore ensured from the top level down but implemented at the local level. The technical assessments are also useful when it comes to offering accreditation to the various centres that can roll out this kind of assistance. This was also being broadened to include new elements of intangible cultural heritage. With ministerial authorization, once a new element has been identified and the new bearer communities and local technical aspects are identified, it can then be included.
12. The delegation of **Viet Nam** expressed appreciation for the hard work done by the Evaluation Body. It welcomed the submission of Guatemala’s file and thanked the Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports for his detailed explanations on how the file will help strengthen the diversity of local expressions around this cultural manifestation. On criterion R.2, *how will the State Party take into account the unintended effects of tourism that the possible inscription of the element would have?*
13. The delegation of **Guatemala** explained that Holy Week in Guatemala has been developed by the communities themselves, comprising the bearers and participants of this cultural event, which is important for the country. Guatemala is a Member State of UNESCO, and it is fully aligned with all the international instruments. It therefore understood that applying for the listing of this particular element means protecting it against any over-exploitation. Guatemala will take measures to ensure that the individuals, groups or communities are the primary beneficiaries of any increased interest in this event thanks to the promotion of the events themselves. Guaranteeing the viability of this kind of intangible cultural heritage element will require detection of any threats. Guatemala is fully committed to making sure that involvement from the tourist sector, as well as from commercial stakeholders, is done with commitment to the element itself. Guatemala has always guaranteed and will continue to guarantee the safeguarding of its intangible cultural heritage once it has taken care of all of these different aspects to ensure that the festivities can continue in a way that has been done for centuries without any threat of over-exploitation for tourist purposes.
14. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked Guatemala for its openness and dialogue, which clarified issues in reference to criterion R.2. It acknowledged that the Convention’s aims are to be applied to the inscription of the element and that this criterion is met in the file. However, *how will the inscription of this element contribute to the objectives of the Convention?*
15. The delegation of **Guatemala** believed that the inscription of Holy Week in Guatemala would highlight not only human creativity, which is necessary for the preservation of these activities, but also its intercultural aspects. This is due to the dialogue and mutual respect among communities which is particularly representative. As expressed in the Operational Directives, the inscription of an element (in this case the Holy Week in Guatemala) would strengthen the capacities of the bearer communities, contribute to the management of all aspects surrounding it, and ultimately strengthen the local, regional and national sense of belonging. This is a living, highly representative set of festivities, and inscription can serve as an inspiration and an example for others on all kinds of expertise and knowledge involved. Inscription of the element would actually bolster safeguarding measures for the bearer communities. It will raise awareness on this particular element, not only locally but nationally and internationally.
16. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala for attending and the Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports for the information provided thus far. It regretted that the file did not benefit from the dialogue process, which would have helped this file. It was thus important to ask the necessary questions in order to have the right understanding as a way to move forward. The delegation believed that all the different aspects required by the criteria were satisfied. In particular, this is a very broad and inclusive festival in which most of the Guatemalan population participates. Thus, inscription would boost visibility for indigenous communities but also serve as a very good example of the kind of inclusiveness and wide-ranging participation that is so representative for the whole country. The delegation was well aware of the importance of elements that foster intercultural dialogue and why this particular element embodies the many values of the Convention.
17. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Guatemala for its explanations, which replaced the dialogue that unfortunately could not take place. The delegation found that all the questions had been satisfactorily answered. It therefore supported inscription of the element.
18. The delegation of **Morocco** fully agreed with the arguments presented by Paraguay and strongly supported its amendment. Guatemala had presented a nomination file of an element considered as a marker of its cultural identity. Indeed, Holy Week in Guatemala is a centuries-old religious and cultural event that represents the diversity of the country. Guatemala had submitted a technically well-presented file. The information provided to the Committee by the submitting State sufficiently satisfied criteria R.1, R.3 and R.5. The file provided information on how inscription will enhance visibility and awareness around intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the file explains in detail how the communities were involved in the development of the proposed measures. The file also explains that the element is included in the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage maintained by the Ministry of Culture of Guatemala. The delegation reminded the Committee that the debates around this file were being followed with great interest by the communities concerned, bearers and practitioners in Guatemala. For these reasons, and following the clarifications provided by the State Party, the delegation supported the inscription of the element.
19. The delegation of **Ethiopia** explained that it had been concerned about some of the points in the file that were raised by the Committee and their connection to the Convention. The issues of tourism, the frequency of the inventorying process and community participation (in criteria R.2 and R.5) were of concern. However, Ethiopia was satisfied by the comprehensive explanations provided. Ethiopia therefore supported the amendment proposed by Paraguay.
20. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** noted that the amendment establishes that the inscription of the element would be an opportunity to bring together twenty-two districts, initiating discussion around intangible cultural heritage at the local level. This is important, as inscription can facilitate and accelerate dialogue between different communities, encouraging them to commit to safeguarding their living heritage, including the measures at national and international level, as described by the Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports. One of the safeguarding measures introduced by the new amendment is the promotion of knowledge through craft making. It also plans to associate the element with other manifestations of living heritage. What seems very interesting is the creation of disciplines at the academic level for the restoration of movable cultural heritage, obviously associated with the implementation of the element. The inscription of the element in a national inventory, as well as the periodicity of updating, would also be transferred to the file through this amendment. The delegation therefore asked the Committee to reconsider the criteria in order to inscribe the element.
21. The delegation of **Slovakia** highly respected and acknowledged the cultural value and importance of the element for Guatemala and its communities, as well for as the whole of humanity in the sense of the Convention. It thanked Guatemala for the clarifications provided. The file does not fulfil three out of five criteria, and the working agreement had already been discussed. The Committee must now move forward in order to improve its working methods. Once again, the question of the use of the dialogue process was raised. The delegation understood that the dialogue process, for example, on criterion R.5 could have clarified the issue of the updating of the inventory. It believed that more in-depth discussion on the use of the dialogue process, perhaps broadening the conditions under which it could be used, would make the process even more inclusive. The Committee could also consider other measures to improve the submission of information, while at the same time taking into account the capacities of the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat. The delegation asked the Evaluation Body to elaborate on why the dialogue process was not used in this particular case.
22. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** explainedthat he had read the proceedings of the previous Committee and noted that the same issues concerning the dialogue process had arisen. The Body can only use the dialogue process when a short and specific question can clarify an evaluation. It cannot be used to give the State the opportunity to rewrite the file. This is the term of reference established by the Committee in line with the Operational Directives. It seemed that the Committee may wish to change this, and the Body will follow any changes made by the Committee. However, at present, the Body had to respect the Committee’s previous decision, which is to use the dialogue process only if a short question can solve an issue. In this file, under criterion R.5, there were at least three issues, which was also the case for criteria R.2 and R.3. In which case, the dialogue process would have required more than ten questions, which was not in line with the terms of reference.
23. The delegation of **Panama** supported the inscription of the Holy Week in Guatemala. It remarked that various sessions of the Committee had also voiced similar concerns in different nomination files regarding tourism aspects of an element. However, CRESPIAL and other such organizations are highly vigilant to any potential effects of over-exploitation. This is the case of the Ministry of Tourism in Panama, for example, whenever issues of mass tourism arise. The delegation noted that some activities are overseen by the Ministry of Culture, while other activities are overseen by other organizations. Indeed, the Committee should consider (in the Basic Texts) how to mitigate the degree of exploitation of tourism. In the future, to better prepare the Evaluation Body, it would perhaps be more judicious to define the kinds and number of questions that can be considered in the dialogue process. Indeed, it would be important to clarify Article 55 of the Operational Directives [on the dialogue process]. If the Committee decided to inscribe the Holy Week, this would be a great leap forward, and the delegation supported its inscription. The explanations of the Deputy Minister fully responded to the questions posed.
24. The delegation of **Brazil** welcomed the presentation of this complex and thorough file by Guatemala, which shows the blend of indigenous and local cultures. Regarding the points raised by the Evaluation Body concerning some terms in the file that do not correspond to the spirit of the Convention, such as the ‘exceptionality’ and even ‘universality’ of this celebration, Brazil acknowledged that the file explains the relevance of the element in terms of the history and identity of the bearer communities. They are indeed diverse, as is often the case for large celebrations such as this, but it was perhaps not explicitly mentioned due to the limited word count of the form. Once again, a short dialogue could have solved this issue. Nevertheless, the relevance of the element from the point of view of the communities was clear. It is true that the recognition of *Semana santa* will increase its visibility and promote dialogue related to tourism. It agreed with the Evaluation Body in emphasizing the importance of developing precautionary measures, which Guatemala had already indicated in the file. Brazil therefore considered that the information provided was sufficient to meet the criteria. Regarding criterion R.3, Brazilian experts undertook a technical evaluation, which may help explain certain inconsistencies of the Evaluation Body on this point. For example, they found that the file detailed safeguarding actions by sectors of the bearers, which is a strength of the file. The evaluation states that there is no evidence of protagonists or participation by the holders in these actions, which is demanded by the draft decision. At first glance, it may be difficult to see protagonists in the suggested actions, especially because the celebration really brings together very distinct groups. But closer reading of the file confirms that the criterion was met. The dossier details actions by sectors, as in the case of academic research, promotion of technical courses and the actions of commerce and gastronomy. Although the delegation believed that the criterion was met, it suggested maintaining the recommendation for broad participation in the inventory stage in safeguarding actions. Thus, according to the point of view of its experts, Brazil considered that Guatemala had met this criterion based on all the information in the file without the need for any additional information from the State Party. Again, a short dialogue could have been used in this instance.
25. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** appreciated the meticulous and diligent work by the Evaluation Body. Upon listening to the questions of the Committee Members and the detailed answers provided by Guatemala, the delegation supported the amendment by Paraguay and the inscription of the Holy Week in Guatemala. In addition, it also agreed with Slovakia and others that many of these questions could have been asked through the dialogue process. Indeed, the Committee needs to fine-tune the dialogue mechanism.
26. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture**, Mr Ernesto Ottone,agreed with the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body in that the Body is governed by the Committee’s mandate. In other words, this is an issue of understanding the precise role of the Body. The Body has to act in accordance with what is requested by the Committee with regard to the dialogue process. After three years of experimenting with the dialogue process, it was clear that the results had shown that this process offered clarification in some respects. But as was seen a couple of years ago, this process cannot answer every single question. The Committee should therefore clarify what this process actually entails. If it is meant to obtain answers that have been explained from some of the submitting States, then the Committee should clarify exactly what it would wish to see happen. This process had been in place since 2017, but it is a work in progress. The validity of the element was acknowledged, but it required a little extra assistance. For this reason, Mr Ottone suggested that the Committee examine this issue. He explained that not all the interventions from the submitting States, in responding to the questions, had provided information that was clearly written in the submitted files examined by the Evaluation Body. Some of this missing information was not contained in the files or was only obliquely mentioned. Clarifying this process would facilitate the work of the Evaluation Body in deciding when it can use the dialogue process, thereby strengthening the Convention even further.
27. The **Chairperson** agreed with the remarks made by the Assistant Director-General on why the Committee was having this debate. It allows it to try new ideas, while also acknowledging the difficulties of dialogue, and to move things forward to evolve, of course, all due respect for the work of the Evaluation Body that had adhered to the framework provided to it. The Chairperson turned to the adoption of the draft decision, noting the broad and active support for the draft amendment presented by Paraguay for the file presented by Guatemala. He turned to paragraph 1, which was duly adopted. Paragraph 2 and criterion R.1 was adopted. He turned to R.3 and the proposed amendment.
28. The delegation of **Morocco** wished to be added to the list of co-sponsors, which included Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Panama, Peru, Rwanda and Viet Nam.
29. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** also co-sponsored the amendment in R.3.
30. The **Chairperson** alsonoted support from Botswana, Uzbekistan, Republic of Korea and Mauritania. With no objections, R.3 in paragraph 2 was duly adopted as amended. R.4, with no amendment, was also adopted. With no comments or objections on the chapeau of paragraph 2, it was duly adopted. The Chairperson turned to paragraph 3 and the amendment in R.2, which was adopted as amended. R.5 was also adopted with an amendment. The chapeau of paragraph 3 was adopted. Paragraphs 4 and 5 were adopted. Paragraph 6, which reads, ‘Further reminds the State Party to consider the effects of the inscription of the element, including the unintended consequences of increased tourism’ was deleted, and its deletion was duly adopted.
31. The delegation of **Sweden** had raised its flag before the deletion of paragraph 6 was adopted, requesting to retain it in the decision, as it was an important recommendation from the Evaluation Body.
32. The **Chairperson** noted that Slovakia, Switzerland and Czechia were in favour of reinstating paragraph 6.
33. The delegation of **India** asked to clarify the Rules of Procedures, noting that once the Chairperson hits the hammer the decision is closed. It therefore asked the Secretariat to clarify the Rules of Procedure that would enable the reversal of a decision.
34. The **Chairperson** clarified that as long as the Committee had not adopted the decision in its entirety, it was able to return to a paragraph if it is supported by the majority of the Members of the Committee and even if it has been adopted. This was why he gave the Committee Members the opportunity to express themselves with regard to Sweden’s request. With no further support, the Chairperson maintained the deletion of paragraph 6.
35. The delegation of **Bangladesh** responded to the question raised by India in respecting the Rules of Procedure and suggested drafting a paragraph that contained elements of paragraph 6, noting that it had some merit, and reminded the State Party to consider the possible effects of inscription of the element.
36. The **Chairperson** agreed with thevery good proposal, as everyone could agree with the merits of the paragraph, which would reflect the wish of Sweden and of the other Members of the Committee.
37. The delegation of **Bangladesh** proposed to delete ‘further’, which would then read, ‘Reminds the State Party to consider the possible effects of inscription of the element, including the unintended consequences of increased tourism, and ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned while implementing safeguarding measures’. It was noted that the paragraph took elements from paragraph 7.
38. The delegation of **Paraguay** remarked that this was already expressed in R.3 and was thus redundant.
39. The **Chairperson** remarked that R.3 did not cite the elements as proposed by Bangladesh and therefore suggested retaining the amendment to the new paragraph 6.
40. The delegation of **Paraguay** could go along with the proposal so as to move forward.
41. The **Chairperson** thanked Paraguay for its flexibility and returned to the wording proposed by Bangladesh, which was duly adopted. The original paragraph 7 was therefore deleted.
42. The delegation of **Panama** explained that one of the most important points of the Convention is implementing safeguarding measures. It was thus contradictory to repeat the recommendation in the paragraph when the initial text in the paragraph under R.3 stated that the implementation of safeguarding measures was carried out with the communities. In which case it would not need to be repeated in this paragraph 6, as mentioned by Paraguay. If the paragraph recommends the safeguarding measures to be abided by, it insinuates that this was currently not the case, and hence the contradiction.
43. The **Chairperson** explained that therewas no contradiction because the Committee was not stating that there was no community participation. It was simply stating that participation should be strengthened and broadened. The decision obviously recognized the participation of the communities.
44. The delegation of **Panama** asked that the floor be given to Guatemala as this paragraph essentially refuted the safeguarding plan, which had been well explained by the Minister.
45. The **Chairperson** regretted thatGuatemala could not speak at this stage of the decision-making process, but the Committee would try to find a consensus as the text remained open for discussion.
46. The delegation of **India** asked that a search of the word ‘safeguarding’ be made to see how many times it appeared in the decision.
47. The delegation of **Peru** agreed with Panama. Indeed, sub-paragraph R.3 already outlined information on the safeguarding measures implemented by Guatemala, as explained by the Deputy Minister of Culture. Thus, there was no need to advocate for a broadening of safeguarding measures.
48. The **Chairperson** remarked that the Committee was in agreement to inscribe the element. It was simply trying to find a consensus on how to draft the decision. He noted that Panama had withdrawn its request in relation to this paragraph.
49. The delegation of **Slovakia** was grateful to Bangladesh for coming forward with this consensus. After hearing Panama’s remarks, the delegation explained that the idea was to encourage even wider participation of communities, even though it was understood that there is participation of communities.
50. The **Chairperson** asked whether the Committee could agree with the wording proposed by Slovakia.
51. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked the Chairperson for supporting the consensus and suggested ‘consider’ wider engagement rather than ‘ensure’, thereby avoiding the ambiguous language.
52. The **Chairperson** agreed that the wording was more consensual.
53. The delegation of **Switzerland** remarked that it was satisfied with ‘ensure’ as, in this context, community participation is at the very heart of the Convention and ‘consider’ was too weak.
54. The **Chairperson** believed that theexplanations given by the Deputy Minister amply demonstrated that the communities were strongly involved, remarking that this element involved more than 50 per cent of the entire Guatemalan population. It would therefore be indelicate to continue with this tone in relation to the specificity of this element. Saudi Arabia's proposal was consistent with the spirit of this element and that expressed in the room. He thanked Guatemala for its interventions that had provided the necessary clarifications.
55. The delegation of **Paraguay** agreed that it made no sense to discuss this topic any further. The Deputy Minister was very clear that this cultural expression is practised throughout Guatemala and involved the broad community. Saudi Arabia’s proposal was thus acceptable.
56. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked Saudi Arabia, Slovakia and Switzerland in trying to enrich this paragraph. It explained that the initial intention was to show respect for the Rules of Procedure and the values of the Convention. The Committee already accepted to remove ‘ensure’ and replace it with ‘consider’, as this would allow the Committee to show respect for the explanation given by the Deputy Minister of Guatemala, who had clearly explained the safeguarding measures. This was the beauty of this forum and the sense of mutual respect, upholding the Convention and the Rules of Procedure.
57. The **Chairperson** noted noobjections to paragraph 7, as amended by Saudi Arabia, which was duly adopted. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.13) **adopted to inscribe Holy Week in Guatemala on the Representative List.**
58. The delegation of **Guatemala** spoke of the historic day for the world but especially for Guatemala. From now on, Holy Week in Guatemala will be recognized by humanity as part of its shared intangible cultural heritage. It represents more than twenty-five cultures in Guatemala, and from today onwards, it has all the necessary safeguarding measures. Holy Week in Guatemala is deeply rooted in the heart of each and every Guatemalan. Multilateralism in the world is recognizing that this element belongs not only to Guatemalans but to the world in general. It is going to endear the element even more and will be fully protected in the country. Guatemala has more than 3,000 years of cultural wealth. Culture is a driver of development, inclusion and participation, while obviously recognizing the importance of this element for each and every person. On behalf of all Guatemalans, the delegation thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Evaluation Body and Morocco for its exceptional hospitality, as well as all the team members working in the ministries. The delegation addressed its communities, bearers, craftsmen and craftswomen, its cooks, hatmakers, its embroiderers and all the families behind the celebration who make this tradition what it is today. Holy Week is intangible cultural heritage of all humanity!
59. In a video address, the **President of Guatemala**, H.E. Mr Alejandro Giammattei, spoke of feeling fortunate to be a Guatemalan, today, more than ever, and to be part of this day that will go down in history, a day in which its more than 3,000-year-old cultural heritage, is recognized by the world as Guatemalan Holy Week and is declared Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. To know the spirit and inner life of a people, it is necessary to delve into its architecture, literature, sculpture, painting, music, dance and culinary art, disassembling each of the pieces of the great puzzle that builds the identity and syncretism of a culture. The people of Guatemala have a great life because its history has been built day by day by its different peoples, and this, in essence, makes it multicoloured, with its different ethnicities, languages, art and cultures reflected. Holy Week in Guatemala integrates spiritual and cultural diversity and responds to a popular expression of faith. It is an element of unity between people and expressions of living culture where traditions flood its memory to relive moments that fill its eyes with tears. Guatemalan Holy Week is a symbiosis of national cultures that merges traditions inherited from a pre-Columbian world and, therefore, the expressions of time are reflected through a rich, unique and profound history that undoubtedly enraptures locals and strangers who witness it and live it with faith, devotion or admiration. Guatemalans are a people with an unbreakable spirit who have learned from their past, transforming it into a wonderful present and projecting a future full of hope. On behalf of more than 17 million Guatemalans, the President thanked UNESCO for this gift, which is not only for Guatemalans but for the whole world.
60. The **Secretary** announced a change in the order of files, approved by the Bureau.
61. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Hungarian string band tradition** [draft decision 7.b.14] submitted by **Hungary**. The element is one of the country’s defining ensembles and one of the most common representatives of folk music culture. The basic fiddle-viola-bass line-up takes many forms across regions and eras, and can be expanded to include additional string players or reed instruments. After initiating a dialogue process on criterion R.3 related to the participation of the community in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended the element for inscription on the Representative List.
62. The **Secretary** informed the Committee that the Secretariat had been requested by the submitting State to change the draft decision. The first change concerned the Ministry of Human Capacities mentioned in the draft decision to the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, and the second change from the Expert Committee of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO to Hungarian National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO.
63. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.14) **adopted to inscribe Hungarian string band tradition.**
64. The delegation of **Hungary** thanked Morocco for its great hospitality in this wonderful country. As the President of the Hungarian National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage and on behalf of the Hungarian Heritage House and the bearers of the element and the musicians of the string bands, the delegation thanked the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their work, and the Committee for their support and decision to inscribe one of its elements on the Representative List. This international recognition is a great honour for Hungary, and it will further strengthen its commitment to the community of string band musicians to continue practising their folk-art tradition and transmitting it from generation to generation. Inscription of the element also strengthens the spread of the dance-house method, which was already on UNESCO’s Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in which string band music plays a prominent role. It thanked the movement of folk music and folk-dance traditions in Hungary that are living heritages today.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Knowledge and practices related to cultivating Khawlani coffee beans** [draft decision 7.b.24] submitted by **Saudi Arabia.** The cultivation of Khawlani coffee beans begins by planting the seeds in mesh bags filled with soil and stored in a shaded area for three to four months. They are then transferred to agricultural terraces that conserve water and soil. Khawlani tribes have been cultivating coffee beans for over 300 years, passing on the skills and techniques to younger generations. Coffee is viewed as a symbol of generosity in Saudi Arabia and serving guests the coffee beans harvested from one’s own farms is considered a sign of honour and respect. The Evaluation Body noted that the State Party presented a previous file in 2019 that was *referred* by the Committee in 2020 following its recommendation. After the referral, the State Party presented a new version of the nomination file that is very well written and includes plans for using sustainable forms of tourism that involve local communities and monitoring the possible unintended consequences of inscription related to tourism and over-commercialization. This file demonstrated how important the referral option is in giving a State Party the opportunity to improve its nomination file and to reinforce the relationship with communities. This can be a positive example for other submitting States. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.24**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.24) **adopted to inscribe Knowledge and practices related to cultivating Khawlani coffee beans on the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** remarked that the inscription of the Knowledge and practices related to cultivating Khawlani coffee beans today is a treasured moment for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, being a living practice of over than 300 years that was passed down among the tribes of the Khawlan mountains of Jazan in southwest Saudi Arabia. The cultivation of Khawlani coffee beans is a testimony of the interaction between farmers and their environment, which inspires positive environmental impact worldwide. The inscription of the element brings joy to the local community of Jazan, especially to the 320 farmers who were involved in the nomination of this process. The delegation thanked each and every one of them who participated, and thanked the local authorities of Jazan. Saudi Arabia is committed to the measures in place to support the community and to safeguard and protect the element. The delegation invited the delegates to enjoy the sensory experience of the Saudi coffee made with the Khawlani coffee bean along with other intangible cultural heritage elements in Saudi Arabia’s exhibition in the Exhibition Hall.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Alheda’a, oral traditions of calling camel flocks** [draft decision 7.b.25] submitted by **Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates**. Alheda’a is an oral tradition of communicating with a flock of camels passed on through generations. The element is used by practitioners today to steer and calm the flock of camels by using oral sounds, gestures and instruments while herding. After initiating a dialogue process on criterion R.3 related to the participation of communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that all five criteria were met and recommended inscription of this element.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.25**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.25) **adopted to inscribe Alheda’a, oral traditions of calling camel flocks** **on** **the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** was overwhelmed with happiness thanks to heartfelt words of congratulations. On behalf of colleagues from the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, the delegation was delighted to have Alheda’a, oral traditions of calling camel flocks inscribed today on the Representative List. This multinational element is a shared heritage across the Arabian Peninsula, practised by communities of camel owners and herders in the submitting States. Alheda’a is an oral expression, a language of understanding expressed by practitioners to communicate, guide and connect with their herd. This oral heritage is a testament to a strong, innate relationship between people and their environment. The inscription of Alheda’a raises awareness locally, regionally and internationally, and instils a sense of pride in its communities of practitioners. It also emphasizes the symbiotic ancient relationship and psychological bond between humans and camels. Traced back thousands of years, this bond is not only based on the human need for transport or a source of natural resources, but also the need for companionship in the stark but pristine desert landscape. The camel is a companion to its owner, understanding its owner’s voice, tone, scent and well-being. The delegation expressed sincere gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates for this joint effort – which will continue to yield results in safeguarding Alheda’a for future generations – and congratulated the local communities engaged in this tradition.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented thenext file, **Manual bell ringing** [draft decision 7.b.28] submitted by **Spain**. Bell ringing in Spain has served as a means of expression and communication, fulfilling a number of social functions, from information-sharing to coordination, protection and cohesion. There is a wide variety of sounds determined by the techniques (chiming, turning or half turning) combined with the skills of bell ringers and the physical characteristics and acoustical properties of the bells, towers and belfries. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The proposed safeguarding measures emphasized the transmission of the practice and its meaning to younger generations. Furthermore, the file demonstrates strong community participation in the development and implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.28**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.28) **adopted to inscribe Manual bell ringing** **on** **the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Spain** introduced the people on stage who came from associations across Spain, representing the historical legacy that is manual bell ringing, which has survived over time and is being transmitted to young people. It is an example of memory, history, tradition and communication. The delegation thanked the Committee, but also those who were at the heart of this file and who had worked for years to bring this inscription to fruition. [Second speaker] Mr Javier García Fernández represented Hispania Nostra, an association from Spain that supports heritage and heritage safeguarding. Since 2017 it has been involved in ensuring the legal and administrative protection of manual bell ringing. It is an example of how civil society in Spain can be involved in safeguarding. [Third speaker] A representative of the bearer communitythanked the Committee for this inscription. There is a very large diversity of languages in Spain, but manual bell ringing is also a rich and diverse language in itself. It has specific characteristics according to each region. It is a legacy that has been transmitted over time from older to younger bell ringers. Bells also have a message and have always adapted to the historic era. They are as varied as the communities that receive the messages of warnings, parties, devotions, sorrow and goodbyes; messages that can be transmitted through bell ringing. It is a universal language in villages, towns and countries. It is a specific identity linked to specific territories. Bell ringers interpret the messages with great emotion. He thanked the Committee on behalf of all bell ringers’ associations.
4. The **Secretary** informed the Committee that the examination of the nomination file submitted by Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran would be placed temporarily on hold so that the Committee could examine the following nominations under 7.b.16 and 7.b.19.
5. The **Vice-Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Crafting and playing the Oud** [draft decision 7.b.16] submitted by the **Islamic Republic of Iran and Syrian Arab Republic**. The Oud is a traditional, lute-type instrument played in Iran and Syria. The musician places the short-necked instrument on their leg, fretting with one hand and plucking the chords with the other. In both countries, the oud consists of a pear-shaped sound box made of walnut, rose, poplar, ebony or apricot wood. After initiating a dialogue process on criteria R.3 and R.4 related to participation of the communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures and in the nomination process, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended its inscription.
6. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.16**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.16) **adopted to inscribe Crafting and playing the Oud** **on** **the Representative List.**
7. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of** **Iran** spoke of how the oud or barbat is the symbol of Iranian and Syrian historical musical instruments that are also crafted and played in other parts of the world. It was of paramount importance that this element was inscribed on the Representative List. The delegation thanked the Syrian colleagues for having jointly prepared this nomination and thanked the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat. It extended gratitude to the Government of Morocco for its excellent hospitality, organization and leadership of this session. The delegation read a verse from a Persian poem by Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī about oud, ‘Bring joy to the magis, with these two pieces of wood, enjoy the scent of oud, play barbat’.
8. The **Syrian Arab Republic** spoke on behalf of the craftspeople and musicians of the oud in Syria to thank the Committee for adopting the inscription of this shared intangible cultural heritage on the Representative List. This is a joyful occasion for the communities, but also a valuable opportunity to promote the cultural diversity, creativity and positive values of our nations. The delegation positively recognized that this is a new window for Syrian and Iranian communities to better engage, create and express their cultural identities. It is true that in these times of unprecedented uncertainty and instability caused by war, natural disasters and pandemics, the well-being of communities around the world is in decline, and cultural heritage is usually the first component of our societies to suffer. This is why it warmly welcomed this inscription as well as further avenues and opportunities that encourage the free, meaningful and supported cultural engagement of populations around the world. The delegation stressed the need to break down the barriers that restrict and isolate communities around the world, weaken their cultural diversity and reverse sustainable development. In the spirit of the Convention, it is the responsibility of leaders and experts in our fields to continue to improve conditions that foster equal opportunity, creativity and mutual respect. It thanked the Iranian artisans and musicians who collaborated with their Syrian counterparts so inspiringly, congratulating them on this well-deserved recognition of their efforts in safeguarding and promoting the shared intangible cultural heritage of the region.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Vice-Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Al-Mansaf in Jordan, a festive banquet and its social and cultural meanings** [draft decision 7.b.19] submitted by **Jordan**. The Al-Mansaf element, with its associated practices and meanings, is a ceremonial dish that is prepared on most occasions in a cooperative atmosphere among the practising individuals. The element evokes a deep sense of identity, social cohesion and attachment. It is associated with the agro-pastoral lifestyle in which meat and dairy are readily obtainable. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.19**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.19) **adopted to inscribe Al-Mansaf in Jordan, a festive banquet and its social and cultural meanings on** **the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Jordan** thanked Morocco for hosting the meeting and the Chairperson in particular. It thanked all those who gave their valuable support and enabled Jordan to inscribe Al-Mansaf in Jordan, a festive banquet and its social and cultural meanings on the Representative List. The delegation thanked its team and colleagues who contributed to the preparation of this nomination, namely, Prof. Hani Hayajneh, whose relentless efforts were key to the success of this inscription. By its transmission through generations, Al-Mansaf has always been subject to socio-economic evolution, representing the dynamic nature of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and reflecting the vitality of the groups and communities concerned. It also has its own customs, skills, rituals, meanings and knowledge transmitted within and between communities and groups for hundreds of years, acquiring meaning by absorbing its practices from the early stages of preparation to related community, festive or ceremonial activities. This dish enables men, women and children, to connect with their communities in a unique manner and will continue to do so for generations to come.
4. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Yaldā/Chella** [draft decision 7.b.15] submitted by the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and **Afghanistan**. Yaldā/Chella refers to a traditional celebration of the sun and the warmth of life. Practised in Iran and Afghanistan, the event takes place on the last night of autumn, when families gather at the houses of elders and sit around a table adorned with a series of symbolic objects and foods. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1, R.2 and R.5 were met, but that the information provided was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.3 and R.4 were satisfied. The file describes the roles of communities and practitioners in their practice of the element. However, it does not provide sufficient details on the past and current safeguarding measures or the role of communities in planning and implementing it and how communities participated in preparing the nomination file. The Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be *referred* to the submitting States Parties.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that an amendment had been received and opened the debate.
6. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the Evaluation Body for its considered views and recommendations. Yaldā/Chella is a social practice or ritual observed by the people of Afghanistan and Iran. The families spontaneously celebrate the brilliance of the sun and the warmth of life on the winter solstice. Everyone was well aware that it concerns a region where violence has unfortunately been prevalent for decades. Criteria R.1, R.2 and R.5 already satisfied the Evaluation Body, proving that this element functions as a very important shared cultural asset, which not only brings peace of mind, bonding and friendship among its bearers and practitioners, but can also promote peace in the violence-stricken areas. However, the nomination could not fully satisfy the Evaluation Body. The delegation expressed concern that one of the nominating States, Afghanistan, has been at war for almost two decades. The inscription of one of its cultural elements will allow the people of Afghanistan a rare opportunity to celebrate life. For criterion R.3, the Body observed that the file describes the roles of communities and practitioners in their practice of the element, but does not provide sufficient details on the past and current safeguarding measures that have been adopted or implemented by the communities. *How can a country at war take sufficient measures to safeguard living heritage while the entire national effort is dedicated to safeguarding the life of its people?* The delegation was convinced that the efforts of Afghanistan extended to safeguarding its elements. It asked Iran’s expert to provide information about the safeguarding measures, the role and participation of the community, and the challenges faced in collecting data.
7. The delegation of **Islamic Republic of** **Iran** thanked the Evaluation Body for its efforts, and Bangladesh for raising these very important questions. With regard to the challenges and difficulties faced during the preparation of the nomination file, the delegation shared its experiences [in his personal capacity] as one of the experts who collaborated with the working group on the nomination file. When he was in Afghanistan to talk and work with the local communities, security was the most significant obstacle to communicating with the local people and obtaining their letters of consent and other complementary documents, such that, as much as he wanted to, he could not enquire more about the involvement of the communities. The people he talked to were mentally, socially and culturally traumatized by the violence they had suffered for two decades. They were firstly concerned about their tangible existence and then their intangible one, which is understandable to all. However, they love the Yaldā/Chella very much when they could celebrate it, and have fond memories of it. For the same reason, only a few letters of consent and supporting documents were delivered by some of the organizations in Afghanistan involved in the preparation of the nomination file. The same consent letters were submitted to the Secretariat. It was recalled that, for reasons of insecurity, the experts of the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture were unable to cover all the localities of Afghanistan necessary to collect the letters of consent and other supporting documents given the presence of armed extremist groups on the roads in the rural areas. Despite the difficulties encountered and the situation and insecurity, Afghans are keen to preserve the continuity of the celebration of Yaldā/Chella. They delegated the representatives of the permanent delegations of Afghanistan and Iran to convey the message that inscribing this element can save one of their much-celebrated elements of life and culture.
8. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** remarked that Yaldā/Chella is a very entertaining, colourful and joyful practice which had contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding, social cohesion and peace among local communities and peoples for centuries. As noted by Bangladesh, criteria R.1, R.2 and R.5 had already satisfied the Evaluation Body. This confirms that the element functions as a very important shared cultural asset, which brings peace of mind, bonding and friendship among all its bearers and practitioners. However, the supporting documents did not satisfy the Evaluation Body. Nevertheless, the element enjoys a strong potential to bring more peace to the region and the delegation asked the respective submitting States to elaborate more on the safeguarding measures involving the communities. Various institutions and organizations were listed in the nomination file. *How did they participate in the planning and implementation of safeguarding measures?*
9. The delegation of **Islamic Republic of** **Iran** explained that many organizations and people inside Iran had provided more than sixty letters of consent, but there were fewer consent letters from Afghanistan. This was due to the difficulties and challenges faced as a result of the war in Afghanistan. As a result, it was unable to obtain all the documents to satisfy the requirements of the nomination form. Nevertheless, it outlined some of the past and current efforts of involvement of the mostly Iranian organizations and people who are in the region. Although a detailed account of the contribution of the local communities was not provided, given the word limitations in the nomination file, some university PhD math students had contributed significantly to the theoretical identification of the exact time of Yaldā/Chella from an astrological perspective. The Persian Gulf Cultural Heritage Association undertook part of the responsibility and expenses of preparing the nomination file’s images. Some members of the anthropological group of the Islamic Azad University took part in identifying similarities of Yaldā/Chella celebrations between Afghanistan and Iran. A number of Iranian individuals and a newspaper worked in both Afghanistan and Iran to contribute to raising awareness on the joint inscription of Yaldā/Chella for Afghan and Iranian local communities. Huge numbers of individuals from the various Afghan ethnic groups followed up on the process of the joint nomination by Afghanistan and Iran. Additionally, a cultural heritage association and one Afghan association announced interest in undertaking any possible activities aimed at facilitating the joint inscription of Yaldā/Chella.
10. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** had several fruitful dialogues with the Ambassador of Afghanistan on the nomination file. This file represents joy and peace, especially in a region where violence has unfortunately been spreading for years. Criteria R.1, R.2 and R.5 were already satisfied according to the Evaluation Body, proving that this element functions as a very important shared cultural asset, which not only brings peace and friendship among its bearers and practitioners but can also promote peace in violent areas. The element has strong potential for bringing more peace to the region. However, one of the issues raised by the Evaluation Body regarded the short duration in the preparation of the nomination, and it wished to hear more on this point.
11. The delegation of **Viet Nam** appreciated the submission of a multinational file from Iran and Afghanistan. It was satisfied with the very clear explanations and supported the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
12. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked both submitting States for this file. People and local communities involved in Afghanistan and Iran play a key role in safeguarding the element by actively performing it. The element is safeguarded by the families in the intimacy of their houses. Following the political changes in Afghanistan, the Afghans find themselves in a hopeless situation. It is in such times when people take refuge with their families and relatives and seek security in traditions. The delegation understood that the Evaluation Body proposed that the file be referred to the submitting States Parties. However, it also understood the situation in Afghanistan as one of a failed state. This could be the only opportunity to inscribe the file under these exceptional circumstances and send an encouraging signal to the people of Afghanistan and Iran. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for having taken measures to secure the anonymity of the individuals and organizations associated with the submission of the nomination file. With respect to the possible inscription, the delegation wondered whether the security measures should be maintained, or others taken, to avoid any risks to the bearers and practitioners, and sought to hear from the Secretariat in this regard.
13. The **Secretary** informed the Committee that the file was submitted prior to August 2021. At the time, it included the names of many individuals, their addresses and the consent letters of practitioners and bearers. The Secretariat took the decision to remove the names from the file, but nevertheless took measures to ensure that the Evaluation Body had access to all the information in the files so that it could evaluate the file. The personal information and identities were not made public. The files were online without identifying any persons or personal information of individuals, and the Secretariat had no intention of changing the situation at this stage.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the steps taken to preserve the anonymity of the bearers of this element, which is extremely important.
15. The delegation of **Afghanistan** referred to section 3 in the nomination file, where a number of past and current joint safeguarding measures were outlined, organized by the bearers and practitioners of both countries. This joint nomination file is the result of past collaboration. The Archaeological Research Center of Iran helped both submitting States in managing the cooperation, from the idea of nominating the element up to the submission of the nomination file, which took about two years. Of course, the work and contacts started long before the official submission. The prepared file was updated and submitted to the Secretariat in 2022, before the collapse of power to the Taliban. Regarding the practitioners, as mentioned by the Secretary, it was agreed to remove the personal information of the experts and practitioners who had helped complete this file.
16. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the submitting States for this nomination and for the additional information. Regarding the security of communities, it wondered whether in the current political situation in Afghanistan, the communities, including many women, would not be endangered by the visibility given to the element’s possible inscription.
17. The delegation of **Malaysia** commended the Evaluation Body for its evaluation of the file. Having studied the Yaldā/Chellanomination file and supporting comments, Malaysia is satisfied that this element has been practised since ancient times and is of great significance in the cultures of the submitting States. Regarding the solidarity and bonds of friendship that spring from the peoples of the region, it considered that inscription of the element will contribute towards peace and brotherhood in the region. The explanation given by Iran had provided a better understanding of the concern of the Evaluation Body regarding criteria R.3 and R.4. Malaysia therefore supported the inscription of this multinational nomination.
18. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** believed in the power of intangible cultural heritage in times of crisis, and wished to focus on the positive aspects of the file and give the relevant communities in the two submitting States the joy of being recognized for the rich heritage of Yaldā/Chella. It understood the reason for the gap between the information of the two countries, especially regarding the participation of communities in the nominating process and planning the safeguarding plan. Afghanistan already answered part of this question, but the delegation encouraged Afghanistan to provide this forum with any information that could not be reflected in the nomination.
19. The delegation of **Brazil** expressed its satisfaction with the information provided by the submitting States. It believed that the Convention is more related to the communities than to the States, and for this reason it defended the technical and artistic focus on the communities. The States Parties presented evidence of safeguarding measures that seek to reach different social levels and promote important leadership to heritage education, which is an element of crucial importance. In this sense, Brazil considered that the dossier provided a good indication of safeguarding elements, and the possible inclusion of the element on the List will further enhance the existing safeguarding activities. Regarding criterion R.4, the element provides important social cohesion to these groups, a top consideration and a priority for cultural goals in the 2030 Agenda. The file stressed a strong relationship between Iranian and Afghan communities and clearly stressed the social functions of the element as a heritage link to the communities. Despite the challenges and the different nations’ capabilities, the States had presented sufficient arguments for the inscription of the element.
20. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the States Parties for the information, noting the difficulties that this kind of file might actually pose for the immediate future. From a technical perspective, participation had been shown to be as broad as possible, which should be kept in mind. The Committee is acknowledging that there are limitations given the situation, and that participation cannot be broader. This was also an opportunity for the Committee to be aware of the importance of intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations, because this really needed to be underscored in the current context.
21. The delegation of **Ethiopia** remarked that the file submitted by Afghanistan and Iran on the Yaldā/Chella is a traditional celebration centred on the gathering of people and families in the houses of elders. It is the very foundation of peace. Inscribing this element was thus a step forward to bringing peace to the region. Ethiopia therefore supported the amendment presented by Bangladesh to inscribe the element.
22. The delegation of **Switzerland** took careful note of the recommendations of the Evaluation Body and was therefore aware that this file may not contain all the elements that it could during peacetime. Unfortunately, peace does not prevail in Afghanistan, and it was acutely aware of the particular extreme circumstances of this element, which must be taken into account. Nevertheless, the delegation asked whether Iran or Afghanistan could give some additional information on the question of safeguarding under the prevailing circumstances.
23. The delegation of **Afghanistan** remarked that the situation in Afghanistan for more than a year is understandable to everyone. The insecure conditions that existed in Afghanistan before the fall to the Taliban undoubtedly affected the need to complete the joint file. At the time of the preparation of the file, the Taliban controlled access routes, especially in the rural areas. Kamikaze attacks, bombing and insecurity made it impossible to obtain letters of consent from all the communities. Regarding the protection and the safeguarding of this meaningful heritage that had been given to communities by ancestors since the beginning of time, Afghanistan, like other nations of the world, regulate their lives with nature and celebrate the longest night of the year with hopes of a new beginning as the days lengthen. This symbolized the significance and meaning of this celebration of this heritage, which had been passed down from generation to generation by Afghan and Iranian families for centuries and is practised by all people. Thus, the communities have the ability to safeguard this element, which will not be a concern. The goal of the submitting States in nominating this ritual is to ensure its visibility at the universal level. Fortunately and undoubtedly, the inscription of this cultural heritage would be a real symbol of solidarity of the nations of the world with the people of Afghanistan who are experiencing the most difficult days of their history.
24. The **Chairperson** noted the broad consensus and suggested to go directly to the adoption of the draft decision. He remarked on the exceptional circumstances of this file and wished to send a message of solidarity from Rabat and from this Committee to the Afghan people.
25. The delegation of **India** spoke of the importance of this file given that it affected a part of the world to which it belonged. The people of Iran and its neighbour, Afghanistan, were of course experiencing difficult times. The delegation assured Iran and Afghanistan that the 1.4 billion people of India shared in this happiness of Yaldā/Chella with them. India valued the 2003 Convention and the intangible cultural heritage of the beautiful people of Iran [speaking in Farsi]. India co-sponsored the amendment.
26. The **Chairperson** turned to the adoption of the draft decision with the amendments to inscribe the element. With no further comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.15) **adopted to inscribe Yaldā/Chella** **on** **the Representative List.**
27. The delegation of **Afghanistan** spoke on behalf of all the towns of Afghanistan to sincerely thank the Committee, the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for having made inscription possible under the unprecedented and particular circumstances currently experienced in Afghanistan. The basic cries of the people are related, among others, to the terror, the misery, and the fear of the world that dominate daily life. The inscription of this traditional and ancestral element, Yaldā/Chella, in common with the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the Representative List represented a friendly and peaceful gathering where poetry, storytelling and music accompany the longest night of the year around the family table. As a symbol of strong support for the nations experiencing the most difficult days of their history, this historical celebration is a friendly and peaceful event that provides solace to the current conflicts and daily problems. On behalf of the Afghan people, the delegation thanked all the countries that co-sponsored the inscription and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The delegation wished to celebrate the happiness of this inscription by sending a message to its suffering people.
28. The delegation of **Islamic Republic of** **Iran** expressed gratitude to Morocco for its warm hospitality and congratulated the Chairperson on his able management of this session. It thanked the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for all its efforts. This session is of great value for the world in terms of the revitalization of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation was honoured that Yaldā/Chella,jointly submitted by Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, had been approved by the Committee. The ancient ancestral celebration of the winter solstice is of great significance to the people of Afghanistan and Iran, and represents the common intangible cultural heritage of the region. The delegation extended profound thanks to Bangladesh, as the sponsor of the draft amendment, as well as all the co-sponsors and the Committee Members. This inscription will have its own role to play in the collective action for the promotion of culture in the regional and international arena, and thus help pave the way for sustainable peace and development in the region and in the world as a whole.
29. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Al-Khanjar, craft skills and social practices** [draft decision 7.b.21] submitted by **Oman**. The Al-Khanjar is an element of Omani culture that is worn by Omani men by wrapping it with a decorated waistbelt. The Al-Khanjar is associated with the craftsmanship of preparing and installing various pieces and materials such as wood, leather, cloth and silver. The element is tied to many cultural and social aspects and meanings in Oman, as it is part of the state emblem, customs and traditions. After initiating a dialogue process on criterion R.3 related to the participation of community in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that all five criteria were satisfied and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
30. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.21**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.21) **adopted to inscribe Al-Khanjar, craft skills and social practices on** **the Representative List.**
31. The delegation of **Oman** thanked the Chairperson and Morocco for their generosity and successful organization of this seventeenth session. It thanked the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their concrete and consistent input. The Sultanate of Oman appreciated this nomination and inscription of the Al-Khanjar as a living heritage. Al-Khanjar is an important part of many social practices, crafts and skills for most communities and persons in Oman from both genders and different generations. It was delighted to celebrate Al-Khanjar as its fourth element inscribed on the Representative List. Oman has nine other joint nominations, which reflect the level of awareness of intangible heritage between communities and the Sultanate.
32. The **Chairperson** congratulated Oman and all the submitting States for their inscriptions, adjourning the day’s session.

*[Thursday, 1 December, morning session]*

**ITEM 7.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 back the delegations and introduced the Ambassador of France to make an announcement.
2. The delegation of **France** announced that a partner bakery had distributed a baguette to everyone, congratulating the bakers on the inscription of the culture of the baguette.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that over 1,000 people had registered to participate at this session, representing 132 countries and indicative of worldwide interest in living heritage. He noted the progress made on agenda item 7.b and congratulated all the States that had their elements inscribed. It was wonderful to see the communities and bearers celebrating in this room. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the Bureau had revised the timetable of the Committee’s work in the hope of completing the examination of all the agenda items before the close of the meeting. He therefore counted on the Committee’s support to limit the length of their interventions, while accommodating the many requests to facilitate the presence of community members and heritage bearers. In this regard, the Committee would begin with the examination of the file submitted by the United Arab Emirates.
4. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Al Talli, traditional embroidery skills** **in the United Arab Emirates** [draft decision 7.b.32] submitted by the **United Arab Emirates**. Talli is a traditional handicraft practiced in various parts of the United Arab Emirates. It refers to the art of embroidering women’s clothes using brightly coloured threads neatly knitted into the sleeves and other parts of female robes. The element helps in combatting unemployment by providing income for practitioners and jobs in associated areas, such as the selling of Talli thread to fashion and tailoring houses. The Talli craft has a cultural dimension that entails inscriptions, shapes and colours. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. However, the Body noted that it will be important for the State Party to monitor the unintended impacts of the element’s inscription and, in particular, the risk of over-commercialization, and ensure that the communities concerned fully understand the purpose of the objectives of the Representative List. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended its inscription on the Representative List.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM.7.b.32**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.32) **adopted to inscribe Al Talli, traditional embroidery skills** **in the United Arab Emirates** **on** **the Representative List.**
6. The delegation of the **United Arab Emirates** expressed gratitude to the Committee for its concerted efforts in raising the profile of intangible cultural heritage globally. The Committee fulfils an indispensable role in enhancing international cooperation through the evaluation of nomination files and the establishment of the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Its work is a compelling example of how it is possible to highlight shared heritage through joint files, while celebrating unique diversities through national files. Preserving these elements ultimately sheds light on our humanity. It is also fundamental in moving towards global sustainable development and fostering peace, and a better understanding as our nations’ heritage grows with each inscription. The United Arab Emirates thanked the Committee and the States Parties for their support. Al Talli was now the fourteenth element by the United Arab Emirates inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage and its fourth national file. Al Talli represents a traditional, decorative handicraft in the United Arab Emirates, producing exquisite, embroidered textiles used to embellish different types of traditional clothes for women. It not only involves intricate artistic and technical skills, but it also builds on generational knowledge among Emirati women across the country. It was hoped that the inscription of Al Talli would further shed light on the richness of Emirati cultural heritage. The year 2022 was an important symbol, as the United Arab Emirates celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of UNESCO membership. The country has always been committed to contributing to the Organization’s mission and advancing cultural, educational and scientific fields. It will continue to support the Committee’s work through mutual cooperation with Member States, built on the principles of knowledge, exchange and the common good.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Orteke, traditional performing art in Kazakhstan: dance, puppet and music** [draft decision 7.b.20] submitted by Kazakhstan. Orteke is an indigenous Kazakh performing art that combines theatre, music and puppetry. This folk art entails a music performance with a *dombyra*, a traditional two-stringed instrument, and a dance performed by a wooden puppet. After initiating a dialogue process on criterion R.3, related to the participation of the community in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1, R.2, R.4 and R.5 were met, but that the information provided after the dialogue was not sufficient to determine whether criterion R.3 was satisfied. Specifically, the Body noted that there were insufficient details in the file about the participation and roles of the community in the planning and implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures. The State Party did not provide the requested clarification during the dialogue process. In conclusion, the Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting State.
2. The **Chairperson** announced that an amendment to the draft decision had been received from India, inviting India to introduce the amendment.
3. The delegation of **India** remarked that the element is very important for the culture and people of Kazakhstan, adding that Central Asian republics are very close to India. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its hard work and the valuable insights provided on this file. As explained by the Body, the file satisfied four criteria, R.1, R.2, R.4 and R.5. The issue concerned criterion R.3 and was related to insufficient details provided on the participation and roles of the communities in the planning and implementation of the safeguarding measures. In this regard, Kazakhstan shared with India the relevant and necessary information that focused on ensuring the viability of the element, which it believed satisfied criterion R.3. It further noted that sufficient steps had been undertaken and were planned in the future, ensuring the widest possible community participation in the elaboration and implementation of the proposed safeguarding measures and plans. The nomination file further highlighted how the submitting State Party uses formal and non-formal education as a safeguarding measure to ensure the viability of the element, notably, on a traditional front, in which teaching and transmission takes place within a system based on master and apprentice, locally known as Ustaz-Shakird. On the formal front, Orteke has been introduced in the curriculum of Kokil Arts College. The delegation asked Kazakhstan to further elaborate on the steps undertaken and plans to undertake in the future to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities in the planning and implementation of safeguarding measures for Orteke. It was noted that Slovakia had extended its support to co-sponsor the amendment.
4. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** thanked Morocco for its hospitality in this session and India for its amendment, as well as the co-sponsoring countries for their support of one of the crucial cultural elements of Kazakh culture, which had been close to disappearing at the end of the last century. It took note of the valuable comments made by the Evaluation Body, which keenly and carefully monitors the Convention’s core principles. It was not an easy task, and the delegation highly appreciated the Body’s capacity, which had been visibly strengthened since its establishment, as well as their helpful comments in guiding intangible heritage actors and States Parties on the implementation of the Convention. As mentioned by India, it was the communities, namely, the traditional artists and craftspeople, who had indicated the importance of safeguarding Orteke to the National Committee, the Ministry of Culture and the National Commission for UNESCO and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The knowledge and skills are transferred through the Ustaz-Shakird, the local apprenticeship system, which represents the communities’ direct involvement in the element’s safeguarding and dissemination. However, it was not yet part of the national curricula of arts and crafts education. Consequently, over the last few years, since the nomination was submitted, the Kokil Arts College and Academy of Arts incorporated Orteke performance and skills of puppet making into the curricula of these two educational institutions as additional educational disciplines. The next step will be to adopt both disciplines as part of basic traditional arts curricula by the Ministry of School Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The arts and crafts communities will design appropriate curricula and submit them through the educational institutions concerned for government approval. The next important step for the communities’ involvement, also mentioned by the Body, is their permanent contribution to the element’s visibility and transmission. As indicated in response to the dialogue process, Kazakhstan conducts biennial Orteke festivals, inviting folk theatres, ethnic musical groups and individual intangible heritage bearers from fourteen countries. In 2022, several popular ethnic music groups in Kazakhstan created special videos on different Orteke performances, which were shown on national television channels. The clips were also shown on video panels at Kazakhstan airports and railway stations. Leading artists of intangible heritage and folk art ensembles have called on various art groups and individual artists to record their Orteke performances and share it on social networks, which are easily found on social media.
5. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** further explained that Orteke bearers, with the support of the Intangible Cultural Heritage National Committee and in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, will promote the activities of local ethnographic and historical museums in conducting inventories on Orteke performances and skills transfer at the local level. Starting from October 2022, the national children’s contest on Orteke performance arts, sponsored by the Metropolitan Company, was held to identify the children’s best artwork on Orteke. The element’s bearers and communities will compile and lead the contest jury, and the artwork will be widely reproduced in municipal social advertising in Astana and Almaty. The Kazakhstan Federation of UNESCO Clubs recently informed the Intangible Cultural Heritage National Committee about its intention to conduct the Orteke Youth Festival in 2023 in order to promote the element and disseminate the knowledge of its origin, history and performances. Finally, the Intangible Cultural Heritage National Committee, in partnership with the National Academy of Science, will coordinate additional research on the origins and development of Orteke. These activities will be conducted by academic expert communities in consultation with recognized individual Orteke bearers, both artists and craftspeople. The findings will contribute to raising public interest for this important cultural element and serve as part of a comprehensive and continuous safeguarding plan.
6. The **Chairperson** thanked Kazakhstan for its clarifications, especially regarding R.3 and the safeguarding measures.
7. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** welcomed the submission of Kazakhstan’s nomination file for Orteke. It had reviewed the concerns raised by the Evaluation Body on the engagement of the communities in the implementation of safeguarding measures and had noted the clarifications provided by the submitting State through the dialogue process. The delegation acknowledged that the State Party had highlighted the participation of stakeholders, including local communities, in the planning and realization of safeguarding measures in the nomination file and its supporting documents. Meanwhile, it drew attention to the work of a research group specifically established for studying and transmitting this element. From this work it was found that the research group unites scholars, independent researchers, bearers, practitioners, and relevant participants who devote themselves in preserving Orteke. What is essential is that the State Party has introduced traditional teaching methods based on a master-apprentice system known as Ustaz-Shakird. Uzbekistan also broadly practices this method. Throughout the years, it has proved to be one of the best instruments in the transmission of knowledge from the older to the younger generation, irrespective of the intangible cultural heritage. The delegation shared its intention to co-sponsor this amendment proposed by India and supported by many Committee Members.
8. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked Kazakhstan for the clarifications related to issues raised in criterion R.3, which provided information on how communities participated in the planning and implementation of safeguarding measures. Saudi Arabia already co-sponsored the amendment presented by India, and suggested – for the sake of time – to move directly to the decision given the wide support for inscription.
9. The delegation of **Morocco** thanked India for its amendment, which is strongly supported. It was convinced of the arguments given by Kazakhstan in relation to criterion R.3 and the safeguarding measures envisaged. The delegation was therefore in favour of the inscription of this element on the Representative List and co-sponsored the draft decision.
10. The **Chairperson** turned to the adoption of the decision, proposing to adopt it as a whole. The Committee Members supporting the draft decision included India, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.
11. With no further comments or objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.20**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.20) **adopted to inscribe Orteke, traditional performing art in Kazakhstan: dance, puppet and music** **on** **the Representative List.**
12. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** conveyed its deep appreciation to the Committee Members for their support of the nomination, as well as to the Evaluation Body for its thorough assessment. It especially thanked India for submitting the amendment and to all colleagues, partners and friends for co-sponsoring the draft. Orteke is an indigenous Kazakh performing art which started centuries ago in the nomadic steppes of Central Asia. It is an important part of the region’s folk heritage and national identity. Orteke was almost forgotten and only survived thanks to a number of master craftsmen and puppeteers who preserved and transmitted the tradition. Today, the revival of Orteke art has been observed, and its inscription on the Representative List will certainly contribute to its further promotion. Orteke is considered to be one of the first puppet cultures of the nomadic tribes in Central Asia. It also symbolizes how the life of human beings is inextricably linked to nature, thereby contributing to the protection of nature and sustainable livelihoods. Orteke facilitates intergenerational communication. It awakens the interest of children in music and musical instruments, and it has an educational meaning, with adults teaching youth to play stringed instruments and create Orteke. It is not only a musical performance, it is an art and education.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Art of crafting and playing Robāb/Rubāb/Rubob** [draft decision 7.b.17] submitted by the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan.** The element is a traditional, short-necked string instrument that has been used in Central Asia for thousands of years. Made from apricot, mulberry or other woods, the size and shape can vary within and across countries. Ensembles and folk groups play the instrument during holidays, celebrations, social events and family rituals. The Evaluation Body considered that only one criterion R.5 is met, and that the information provided is not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.1, R.2, R.3 and R.4 are satisfied. The file provided three different and separate descriptions of the element and the knowledge and skills associated with it, and separate descriptions of the social functions and cultural meaning. The separate descriptions from each country related to safeguarding measures also made it difficult to evaluate the file and to determine the multinational aspect of the nomination and element. The Body reminded States Parties that a multinational file must be the consequence of multinational work. During this session, several good examples of multinational files had been inscribed and will be inscribed. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting States.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.17**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.17) **adopted to refer Art of crafting and playing Robāb/Rubāb/Rubob to the submitting States.**
3. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **The art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiţă) – an element of cultural identity in Romania and the Republic of Moldova** [draft decision 7.b.23] submitted by **Romania** and the **Republic of Moldova**. The art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (called altiță) is an essential part of Romanian and Moldovan folk dress for men and women. It juxtaposes a simple cut with rich and colourful ornamentations that are stitched using complex sewing techniques. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1, R.4 and R.5 were met, but that the information provided was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.2 and R.3 were satisfied. The file explained that the communities are involved in past and current efforts to safeguard the element. However, the file did not adequately explain the role of the communities concerned in both submitting States in terms of planning and implementing the proposed safeguarding measures. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended that the nomination be referred to the submitting States.
4. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** explained that, following a fruitful dialogue with the submitting States and further clarification on the criteria mentioned, it became clear that the art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (called altiță) plays a cultural and social role that is common with other elements of living heritage and valuable to local communities, contributing to cultural creativity. As a multinational file, the two submitting States were committed to working together on measures to safeguard the element through activities and programmes, and to manage threats after inscription by involving the communities to ensure the craft’s viability for the sake of all citizens wearing or admiring the blouse. In terms of gender, the current form of craft making involves both women and men in the various phases of making and selling the blouses, revealing their cultural messages. The delegation was convinced that this file satisfied all the criteria, but wished to ask the States Parties to present further clarification with regard to the direct involvement of the communities in the planning and implementation of the measures designed to safeguard the element. The delegation recounted having asked a heritage person in Romania what this embroidery meant to the people of both nations. The person replied that this embroidery carries a story of life; it is used for protection, fertility and prosperity, and is a temple carried by its own bearer. Nowadays, this tradition is being carried as a truly living heritage. Traditionally, these blouses used to be burned after they were used. They exist today because they are a living heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, passing on this great knowledge to others, as beautifully worn by the two representatives of the two delegations.
5. The delegation of **Romania** invited its expert, Ms Ioana-Otilia Baskerville, to explain the file. [Second speaker] She thanked Saudi Arabia for the attention devoted to understanding the element and explained that the idea of nominating this element was brought about five years ago by the groups and associations of practitioners and admirers of this craft in both two countries. It was their need and wish to have this craft acknowledged by UNESCO as a strong message of their cultural identity and daily practice, and in their constant belief in the capacity of the element to represent living heritage in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The delegation was simply a messenger of the bearers and practitioners of civil society. As the nomination file pointed out, the communities play an important role in preserving and developing the tradition of sewing and embroidering. They constantly create and innovate thanks to their thorough knowledge of techniques and their own talent. Noting that the Evaluation Body only used information contained in the nomination file for decision-making, Ms Baskerville read out the following, “craftswomen have proposed a number of local and regional measures and activities for the safeguarding plan (collaborations with local museums and educational establishments, editing promotional materials, stimulating their participation in fairs and other exhibitions together with their apprentices)”. The safeguarding plan – fully supported by the State and mentioned in the proposed amendment – is the result of this broad bottom-up approach and of a community-driven movement that it actively encouraged at every step in the nomination process.
6. The **Chairperson**thanked Saudi Arabia for the heartfelt presentation of the element.
7. The delegation of **Viet Nam**appreciated the work of the Evaluation Body and fully agreed with Saudi Arabia. It therefore supported the inscription of this element on the Representative List and found that the file satisfied all five criteria.
8. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** noted the moving anecdote told by Saudi Arabia, adding that it was convinced of the enthusiasm shown by the relevant communities, cherishing the element as the essence of their cultural identity. It therefore co-sponsored the amendment. The delegation nevertheless wished to hear more about the role of communities in planning their safeguarding measures, which might not have been incorporated in the file.
9. The delegation of **Romania**, represented by Ms Ioana-Otilia Baskerville, wished to stress the importance given to the nomination file in highlighting the passion of the communities, groups and individuals in the creation of this blouse. The initial process began in 2003 with a movement initiated by non-governmental organizations and cultural associations, which then continued with the involvement of craftspeople in both countries. In the two countries, the practitioners are grouped into two main categories: those who make the blouse as a main source of livelihood, which is the category of craftspeople and main bearers of the element, who were very much involved in the nomination file; and the non-professional individuals who create the blouse, sewing and the blouse for themselves and for their family members. It is the people from these two categories who make and cherish the blouses, and they are the main actors in the process of implementing the safeguarding measures.
10. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked the submitting States for bringing to the Committee’s attention to this intangible cultural heritage, which is widespread in different forms and found in different parts of the world but given little attention. It also appreciated the amendment by Saudi Arabia. The delegation asked the submitting States to briefly reflect on the extent to which the bearers and promoters of the element were ready to face the possible risks following its inscription on the Representative List in each of the countries.
11. The delegation of **Romania** explainedthat awareness-raising and educational events will be organized after inscription at national and international levels. This will be led by bearers in order to highlight the complex crafting and sewing mechanism of the embroidery and to transmit it to new apprentices and to the general public in Romania and the Republic of Moldova who are interested in understanding more about this element. During the consultations and discussions carried out during the nomination process, the bearers emphasized their willingness to support the dynamic nature of this element and to be fully involved in the process of heritage-sensitive design, as long as it is done with respect for the features of the element as inherited within the communities.
12. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked Romania for its important explanations that help understand the participatory manner of planning the safeguarding measures and how they will be implemented in the future. It sought some clarifications, as it was not clear whether the situation of the element is identical in both countries, in other words, whether each submitting State has its own safeguarding strategy or whether the safeguarding measures are common to both countries. The delegation therefore sought to better understand the collaborative process and the philosophy behind the safeguarding strategy. *If the safeguarding measures are common for both countries, are the activities going to be coordinated and implemented together by Romania and Moldova?* With regard to R.2, the file explained in rather general terms that inscription will encourage communities to safeguard the element at the local and national levels and encourage greater appreciation of the craftsmanship associated with it, including attracting attention among the younger generation. *How will inscription raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general as requested by the Evaluation Body?*
13. The delegation of **Romania** further explained that the file showcases an element of living heritage which, as with many multinational nominations, transcends administrative and political borders. This craftsmanship is actively present in five different regions of Romania and in the Republic of Moldova. The similarities of this heritage in these regions are so strong that, by their own initiative, groups and associations of craftswomen, speaking the same language and separated only by administrative borders, have constantly worked towards fruitful exchange of opinions and knowledge. They participated in trainings and seminars in each other’s countries. Even children learning to sew the blouse in families and communities participate in transnational events. The significant common ground, informally ensured by communities, groups and individuals, determine that the two States work together to propose a common safeguarding plan, with nationally relevant adaptations. The plan will be coordinated by non-governmental organizations and associations of craftspeople in both countries, with assistance offered by the two governments.
14. The delegation of the **Republic of Moldova** confirmed that the driving force in Moldova came from the associations and people who prepare and embroider the altiță in society. In fact, both governments worked hard on this file for the last two years, including on an action plan to promote the tradition of the blouse that includes its history and traditions. This will continue not just at the governmental level but by the members of society in both countries, and there is strong determination to continue to implement the plan.
15. The **Chairperson** thanked Romania and the Republic of Moldova, and noted that Uzbekistan, Malaysia and Morocco also co-sponsored the amendment. He thus proposed to proceed directly to the adoption of the decision with the amendment proposed by Saudi Arabia. The Committee Members supporting the amendment included Saudi Arabia, Angola, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Slovakia, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. With no further comments or objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision**[**17.COM 7.b.23**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.23) **adopted to inscribe The art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiţă) – an element of cultural identity in Romania and the Republic of Moldova on** **the Representative List.**
16. The delegation of **Romania** remarked thatthis was a particularly special day, as it was also Romania’s National Day. Romania was happy to represent the joint nomination with the Republic of Moldova at this seventeenth session of the Committee, hosted with generosity by the Kingdom of Morocco. On behalf of the two countries, the delegation expressed gratitude to the Evaluation Body, the Committee and the communities of this intangible heritage. It was grateful to the expert evaluators who had given attention to the nomination, offering valuable insights, recommendations and support in consolidating efforts, present and future, related to the element but also to intangible cultural heritage in general. The delegation welcomed the inscription of this common element on the Representative List, as it prepared for the even more important monitoring of effectiveness of the safeguarding measures, and the protection of the element placed at the heart of this shared culture and for the entire world.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Minister of Culture of the Republic of Moldova**, H.E. Mr **Sergiu Prodan**, spoke of this historic day for the citizens and communities of both countries. It is a reconfirmation of the existence of common values in the art of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder, altiţă. This symbolism is completed with the National Day of Romania and the thirtieth anniversary of the Republic of Moldova in UNESCO. The Minister welcomed the opportunity offered by the Committee to provide all the necessary clarifications in order to support the nomination file for inscription on the Representative List. In this troubled international context, the Minister congratulated all the members of the communities who preserve and transmit this art and know-how to keep its identity and values alive. At the same time, he was grateful to all the actors at the local level, to civic initiative groups, to non-governmental organizations and to all those involved in heritage education, ensuring the growth of intangible values and their promotion.
2. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Social practices and knowledge related to the preparation and use of the traditional plum spirit—šljivovica** [draft decision 7.b.26] submitted by **Serbia.** The element is a traditional plum spirit. It includes the complex knowledge and skills to prepare the drink in a home environment as well as its use in everyday and ritual practices. The preparation has multiple stages involving families and communities. Plums are usually grown on family farms and harvested in the autumn. The element plays a key role in developing a sense of belonging among respective groups. Šljivovica is a marker of the traditional culture and identity of communities and individuals, and is used in wedding rituals, important social events, birthdays and funerary rituals. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.26**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.26) **adopted to inscribe Social practices and knowledge related to the preparation and use of the traditional plum spirit—šljivovica on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Serbia** expressed deepest appreciation and gratitude to the Committee for its decision to inscribe Social practices and knowledge related to the preparation and use of the traditional plum spirit—šljivovica on the Representative List. It thanked the members of the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their dedicated work in the preparation and evaluation of its nomination file. For the Serbian people, various aspects of the culture of šljivovica, from plum cultivation and the process of preparation of the traditional spirit to its use in private or public everyday ritual events, represents important living heritage. The role played by this traditional spirit in the lives of communities and individuals makes šljivovica one of the symbols of Serbian national identity. The delegation was confident that inscription of this element on the Representative List will further strengthen its safeguarding on all levels and contribute to increasing its visibility internationally.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life** [draft decision 7.b.27] submitted by **Slovenia**. The element is a practice that represents a way of life for many individuals, families and communities, who obtain bee products for food and traditional medicine and use their knowledge and skills to care for the honeybees and the environment. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and highly appreciated a well-prepared and well-written file that demonstrates the linkages between intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability. The element promotes sustainable development through caring for the environment, and safe food and environmentally friendly beekeeping practices. It represents a very good example of biocultural diversity. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of the element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received for this nomination and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.27**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.27) **adopted to inscribe Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life** **on the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Slovenia** thanked the Evaluation Body for its positive recommendation and the Committee for its decision to inscribe this element that connects many individuals, families, associations, clubs and communities from different generations and social backgrounds in the countryside and urban areas of the country. The delegation was indebted to so many who had helped during the nomination process, especially the bearers and practitioners who continuously inspire and surprise with the richness of their practices, skills, cultural expressions and social roles. Their passionate transfer of knowledge transcends borders, as does their mutual respect and deep appreciation of nature, which is based on the achievements of predecessors yet forward-looking. This element also receives broad support beyond the single domain, demonstrating that beekeeping in Slovenia is a way of life and a central example of the role of intangible cultural heritage in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices** [draft decision 7.b.33] submitted by 15 States Parties, **Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates** and **Yemen**. Typically found in deserts and dry, temperate climates, the date palm is an evergreen plant with roots that deeply penetrate the earth in search of humidity. The communities in the areas where the date palm has spread still maintain the related practices, knowledge and skills. These include caring for and cultivating the date palm tree and using its parts for traditional crafts and social rituals. The Evaluation Body considered that all five criteria were met and highly appreciated the collaboration in the preparation of a very well-written multinational nomination file. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended its inscription on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.33**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.33) **adopted to inscribe Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices on the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **United Arab Emirates** spoke on behalf of the fifteen States in the multinational file, Date palm, knowledge, skills, traditions and practices, which had been inscribed on the Representative List since December 2019, expressing gratitude and appreciation for UNESCO’s concerted efforts in implementing the 2003 Convention and for providing the opportunity for the State of Qatar to join the file. Joint files fundamentally highlight the cultural ties between nations and people and contribute to fostering peace and understanding. The inclusion of Qatar in the nomination file is a significant addition, considering the importance of the nation’s date palm heritage and its social and cultural impact. Furthermore, this inclusion extends an open invitation for other nations to join the file with the aim of preserving a related heritage. The delegation made a special mention of the tangible efforts of ALECSO[[23]](#footnote-24) and its distinguished role in supporting joint Arab files and in achieving the goals and plans of the Convention.
4. The delegation of **Qatar** thanked the Evaluation Body and Member States, as well as the United Arab Emirates. It also thanked Morocco for the exceptional organization of the Committee’s work, as well as the Chairperson for his wise presidency. The State of Qatar attaches great importance to the preservation and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, placing the protection of intangible heritage at the heart of its national policies and international efforts through the work of the 2003 Convention. The accession of Qatar among the submitting States of the file on date palm testifies to the attachment of the history and culture of Qatar to this cultural element, which has cultural, social and economic dimensions at the local level, especially as date palm enjoys an authentic and long-standing heritage in Qatar and the Arab region. The palm tree is an exceptional symbol, revolving around the foundation of our culture. It represents the nerve of the economic and social life of ancestors and across generations, until today, through exchanges with other cultures. The palm tree has thus remained a fundamental base in Qatari and Arab society.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Ceremony of Mehergan** [draft decision 7.b.29] submitted by **Tajikistan** and the **Islamic Republic of Iran**. The element is a wide-scale, annual thanksgiving celebration that takes place in the autumn. The specific rituals performed during the ceremony vary according to the religion. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1 and R.5 were met, but that the information provided was not sufficient to consider criteria R.2, R.3 and R.4 satisfied. The file explained that the communities were involved in past and current efforts to safeguard the element. However, the file did not explain the role of the communities concerned in both submitting States in terms of planning and implementing the proposed safeguarding measures. Furthermore, the file did not explain how the communities were involved in the nomination process. For these reasons, the Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting States.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.29**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.29) **adopted to refer Ceremony of Mehergan** **to the submitting States.**
3. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Harissa, knowledge, skills and culinary and social practices** [draft decision 7.b.30] submitted by **Tunisia**. The element includes the knowledge, skills and culinary and social practices associated with the production and consumption of harissa. Harissa is used as an ingredient, condiment or hors d’oeuvre, and is an integral part of household provisions in the daily culinary and food traditions of Tunisian society. After initiating a process of dialogue on criterion R.3 relating to the risk of a standard procedure for human creativity, the Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
4. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.30**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.30) **adopted to inscribe Harissa, knowledge, skills and culinary and social practices on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Tunisia** spoke of its pride of this inscription of harissa, whose values and meanings are multiple. Indeed, harissa encompasses a series of knowledge, know-how and rituals related to its consumption and production. Used as an ingredient, condiment or appetizer, harissa is an integral part of daily and festive culinary practices in Tunisian society. It is most often prepared by women in a collective framework marked by mutual aid and cooperation, hence its function in strengthening social cohesion. Beyond its technical aspects, reflecting a perfect harmony with nature, harissa has an important symbolic value. It represents warmth, activity and vitality. This international recognition is a reward for the efforts made to safeguard the element. Indeed, highlighting culinary and food traditions represents an essential component of intangible heritage. The delegation thanked Morocco for the warm welcome, hospitality and impressive organization, expressing gratitude to the Evaluation Body and to all the members of the Committee for their commitment.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Turkmen-style needlework art** [draft decision 7.b.31] submitted by **Turkmenistan** and the **Islamic Republic of Iran**. The element is a form of decorative applied art, combining the skills of creative work on different types of fabric. The element’s social functions and cultural meaning are related to its use in wedding dresses and clothing for brides and grooms, and in objects used in funerals, social gatherings and cultural events. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended inscription of this element on the Representative List.
2. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.31**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.31) **adopted to inscribe Turkmen-style needlework art** **on the Representative List.**
3. The delegation of **Turkmenistan** extended sincere gratitude to the Chairperson for his excellent moderation, and Morocco and the Secretariat for the hospitality and organization of this session. On behalf of Turkmenistan and all the people in the country, the delegation expressed the highest appreciation to the Committee and the Evaluation Body for inscribing Turkmen-style needlework art on the Representative List. This nomination was prepared together with its neighbour country, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Turkmen-style needlework art is one of the most famous folk crafts of Turkmenistan. Needlework is one of the oldest forms of applied art and has become widespread among women. In the past, skilled women have found beautiful patterns, masterfully combined colours and transferred patterns to fabric, creating many types of national cloth. In the art of needlework, they have endowed patterns with the beauty of nature. The inscription of the element on the Representative List will become the pride of local communities, especially younger generations, as they see that the world has recognized their centuries’ old art and will thus promote it. The delegation thanked everyone involved, from the communities and bearers to the Body and the Committee.
4. The delegation of **Islamic Republic of** **Iran** expressed thanks for the inscription of Turkmen-style needlework art on the Representative List, which was jointly submitted with Turkmenistan. For centuries, the two countries have shared many cultural commonalities, including Turkmen-style needlework. This type of needlework enjoys unique patterns and designs, of which Turkmen and Iranian women have good knowledge. It is an identity marker of societies in both countries. The patters have been inspired by natural motifs, sacred beliefs, and respect for nature. The delegation expressed gratitude and best wishes to all delegates.
5. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Traditional embroidery in Central Asia** [draft decision 7.b.34] submitted by **Uzbekistan**, **Tajikistan** and **Kazakhstan**. The traditional embroidery in Central Asia is used for decorating fabric products and decorative items such as pillows, headdresses, curtains and bags. The most complete art of embroidery is revealed in wall carpets, ceremonial clothing and interior decorative items such as tablecloths. The Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1 and R.2 were met but that the information provided was not sufficient to consider criteria R.3, R.4 and R.5 as satisfied. The file provided information about various proposed safeguarding measures from each submitting State. However, it did not provide any joint safeguarding measures from the submitting States and did not give any demonstration that the file was prepared jointly and that the communities were involved in the nomination process. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting States.
6. The **Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.34**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.34) **adopted to refer Traditional embroidery in Central Asia to the submitting States.**
7. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Kalela dance** [draft decision 7.b.35] submitted by **Zambia**. The Kalela dance originated during colonial times in the Luapula Province of Zambia. Kalela is a kind of dance drill formation in which the dancers form two or three lines, moving forwards and backwards as they sing along to the drumbeat. It was adopted by mine workers and used for entertainment at the Chief’s Palace during traditional ceremonies, funerals, harvest celebrations and other important occasions. After initiating a dialogue process on criteria R.2 and R.3 related to the participation of the communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that criteria R.1, R.4 and R.5 were met, but that the information provided after the dialogue was not sufficient to determine whether criteria R.2 and R.3 were satisfied. The file explained past and current safeguarding measures but did not provide details on efforts of the communities to safeguard the element, and the dialogue process did not provide sufficient clarification on this issue. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body recommended that the nomination be referred to the submitting State.
8. The **Chairperson** noted that the Secretariat had received a request for an amendment from Botswana, inviting Botswana to present its amendment.
9. The delegation of **Botswana** explained that Kalela dance is a form of entertainment used during traditional ceremonies, funerals, harvest celebrations and other important occasions. The amendment provided the required information, as advised by the Evaluation Body. It therefore believed that the nomination satisfied the criteria for inscription. Referring to UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa, the delegation was of the view that Zambia should be listened to and that its case be re-considered, as this would raise awareness in the African region and serve as a motivation for other African countries to submit their intangible cultural heritage for inscription. It strongly believed that the information requested had been provided in the file and that the element should therefore be inscribed. The full details of the amendment would be better explained by Zambia.
10. The delegation of **Zambia** explained that the Kalela nomination was prepared with the full participation of the groups and communities that practice the element. The element covers three provinces, which were all involved. Preliminary meetings were held with the groups, group leaders, communities and community/traditional leaders in all three provinces and districts that practice the element. In Copperbelt Province, groups and group leaders were involved at every stage in Ndola, Kitwe, Luanshya, Chingola and Mufurila districts, as was the case in Luapula Province (in the Mwense, Samfya, Chifunabuli and Mansa districts) and the Northern Province (in the Chilubi and Lupososhi districts). Sensitization meetings were held in all the provinces and districts that practise the element. Prior consent was received from the communities before and during the exercise to update the files and prepare the nomination. All the groups, group leaders and community personalities who have knowledge and experience were involved during the updating and preparation of the inventory and the nomination form. The involvement of the custodians was done in a number of stages and activities. Firstly, sensitization and prior consent was organized through the provincial and district offices. Secondly, outdoor workshops were conducted with the concerned stakeholders, custodians and practitioners of the element, during which consent was also received and the preparation of the nomination was undertaken. Thirdly, the communities were involved during the inventory activities. Fourthly, during the follow-up to fill in the gaps, the communities were also involved in all the final stages to validate the final submission.
11. The delegation of **Zambia** assured the Committee that the communities and groups were fully involved in the proposed safeguarding measures and their implementation. A series of meetings to sensitize capacity-building and consent-seeking were conducted. The meetings were held in all the provinces and districts where the element is found. The meetings included all the dance groups, traditional leaders, stakeholders and community leaders as custodians of the element. Royal Establishments were consulted such as Mibenge, Mwewa and Chitembo Royal Establishment of Luapula Province and Chungu Royal Establishment in the Northern Provinces. They indicated that they need more platforms for performances during festivals – such as the Kalela Festival in Kasandwe, public and state functions, social functions and traditional ceremonies –to continue performing and practising the element. Generally, the dance’s traditional and community leaders were able to indicate that their biggest challenge to the implementation of the proposed measures were financial incapacity and lack of a variety of costumes, instruments and musical tools to support their performances. In terms of visibility, the Kalela dance was performed during colonial times and the post-independence era until the 1980s when it was practised in most towns of the Copperbelt, such as Chililabombwe, Kalulushi, Chingola, Kitwe, Mufulira, Luanshya and Ndola. In the Luapula and Northern Provinces, it was performed in rural areas only. The dance had even expanded to other towns such as Kabwe and Lusaka. Currently, the dance is found only in five districts of the Copperbelt and only one dance group per town, compared to in the past, when each mine compound had a Kalela dance group. Its inscription would therefore make the dance more visible and would lead to the creation of more groups, while strengthening the existing ones. It was also expected that the Kalela Festival, a festival that was created two years ago in Luapula Province, Samfya District, would grow to become a bigger festival and promote greater visibility of the Kalela dance. At the national level, the inscription of the Kalela dance will make it visible in other parts of the country. Inscription was expected to make the dance more visible countrywide, even among other non-Kalela dancers. The inscription will also motivate other Ushi, Bisa, Ngumbo and Bemba speaking groups in other parts of the country to create new dance groups and strengthen the existence of the dance in other parts of the country. The involvement of Kalela dance in other national festivals, such as the Pamodzi Festival in Lusaka, Lusaka Province, and the Livingstone Cultural and Arts Festival (LICAF), Southern Province, will also increase its visibility.
12. The delegation of **Zambia** further explained that it is expected that the Kalela dance involvement at public and state functions will increase its visibility at the national level. The inscription of Kalela dance would also increase its visibility internationally, as there will be an increase in performances at local and national festivals, traditional ceremonies, and State and public functions. The inscription was also expected to lead to an increase in the documentation and research of the element internationally. The inscription of Kalela dance on the Representative List will be on an international UNESCO List and website, and this will provide a window for research, not only on Kalela dance but also on other related intangible heritage elements by scholars. Furthermore, information generated by research television and radio at international level will lead to the Kalela’s visibility internationally. Inscription was also expected to lead to an increase in Kalela-related exhibitions at international and local museums and other related fora that have a wide audience, helping to promote the publication of articles on Kalela. Finally, the State was ready to support all these measures and activities proposed and also planned to continue creating district intangible heritage committees so as to ensure the continued participation of communities in the planning and implementation of intangible cultural heritage programmes. Currently, the committees have been created at provincial levels, but there will be an urgent need to also create them at the district level. Furthermore, Zambia had created a mechanism to support community-based initiatives technically and financially for the organization of festivals and exhibitions. The State would continue to support the hosting of the Kalela dance Festival and the Samfya Arts Festival. Cultural policies and related legislation would be implemented to ensure the element does not encounter unintended consequences as a result of inscription.
13. The **Chairperson** thanked Zambia for all the clarifications.
14. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** appreciated the thorough and consistent work of the Evaluation Body and was satisfied with the detailed supplementary information provided by Zambia in answering the questions by Botswana. It found the nomination worthy of inscription, which would enrich the geographic balance and diversity of elements in this cycle.
15. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked Zambia for submitting this file, which would increase the number of inscriptions in Africa. The delegation remarked on the strategic issue that is Priority Africa, which is always at the crossroads of discussions. The Committee should ask how the Committee will address the real disparity between Africa and the rest of the world in inscribing elements. Africa is known for its rich cultural heritage. However, it faces various challenges, notably, meeting the criteria by providing adequate clarifications. This persistent challenge affected not only the submitting State of Zambia but also most States Parties in the Africa Group, including Ethiopia. It was thus the right time for the Committee to work in line with the basic spirit of multilateralism and to really address the gap between the inscription of elements of intangible heritage in Africa and the rest of the world. Finally, based on the detailed explanations provided by Zambia, Ethiopia supported Botswana’s amendment and the inscription of Kalela dance on the Representative List.
16. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its thorough report, Botswana for its amendment, and Zambia for its elaborate explanation, adding that it supported the amendment by Botswana.
17. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** believed that the detailed clarifications provided by Zambia in reference to the Kalela dance were satisfactory, and it supported the amendment. It echoed the Committee Members on the importance of supporting the inscription of files from Africa.
18. The delegation of **Malaysia** was satisfied with the additional information given by Zambia on the questions raised by Botswana. Malaysia therefore supported the inscription of the element, echoing the statement made by Ethiopia.
19. The delegation of **Morocco** thanked Botswana for its amendment, which it supported. It also thanked Zambia for its convincing clarifications, particularly with regard to criteria R.2 and R.3. Zambia had reassured the delegation as to the contribution of the element’s inscription in terms of visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general, as well as the involvement of communities in the proposed safeguarding efforts. It noted that this was the only file examined by the Committee from the African Group, and the Committee could therefore send a signal by facilitating the inscription of this element.
20. The delegation of **Rwanda** thanked the Evaluation Body for the careful analysis of this native and original element of Zambia, the Kalela dance. It appreciated the observations made and recommended that the Committee consider an essential point that favoured its inscription, that is, that the Kalela dance is a vector of inclusion and social cohesion between the different communities in Zambia. The delegation thanked Botswana for the proposed amendment, and Zambia for the presentation of the element. Rwanda co-sponsored the amendment.
21. The delegation of **Burkina Faso**supported the inscription of this element, which emphasizes dialogue and cultural diversity as essential values that can contribute to the visibility of cultural heritage in general. It had a number of technical questions on the evaluation by the Evaluation Body. *What justifies the use of standardized letters?* *Is it to facilitate the process of obtaining consent, or is it because not all members of the communities concerned can read the language in which the documents are presented?* *Or is it a sign that Africa is strongly marked by orality?* Furthermore, the evaluation considers that the communities are not sufficiently involved in the safeguarding of the element. *What is the level of involvement of the communities in the safeguarding of the element?* Given that musical instruments are important elements of cultural heritage and are associated with the implementation of the element, and that these instruments are made principally by the communities themselves, the delegation asked Zambia to clarify the involvement of these communities in the construction of the instruments, which could therefore help in safeguarding the element. Burkina Faso reiterated its support for the inscription of this element.
22. The **Chairperson**noted the broad support and asked Zambia to respond.
23. The delegation of **Zambia** explained theuse of standard letters, which was due to the fact that outside urban areas, people in rural areas do not know how to read or write, so it is impossible for them to write their own letter of consent. A standard consent form has to be used, which is explained to them and interpreted in their own language, working alongside them to obtain their consent. For this reason, the consent forms are both in English and also in the local language, so that they understand that the forms are is English, followed by the translation. In terms of safeguarding measures and community involvement, the delegation explained that in the context of field work, when going to rural areas and working with the practitioners, nothing can be achieved without the authority of the traditional leaders, the custodians and practitioners. The work on the ground can take weeks when working with them in the preparation of the file. They are fully involved in the process, from the outset through to completion, and not only on the definition, visibility and safeguarding measures. Only when traditional leaders give their consent and are satisfied can the file be submitted.
24. The **Chairperson**thanked Zambia for the clarity of the explanations provided.
25. The delegation of **Brazil** was satisfied with the information provided. Regarding point R.2, it was recalled that the State Party had already mobilized to promote safeguarding measures to protect cultural practices at regional and national levels. The delegation believed that the inscription of the Kalela dance on the Representative List would contribute to even greater visibility and raise awareness about intangible cultural heritage in general at the international level. Regarding R.4, the delegation understood that the consent letters are presented in a standardized way to mitigate possible limitations of the local communities in expressing their free, prior consent. This was also a problem faced in Brazil and perhaps in the file from Cuba. In these societies, comments and written expressions can sometimes be difficult to communicate. Regarding R.5, the delegation reminded the Committee that for the purpose of the 2003 Convention, intangible cultural heritage means expressions that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage. As set out in the Evaluation Body’s report, the element was included in Zambia’s national inventory in December 2017. The inventory is maintained by a number of organizations, including the Ministry of Tourism and Arts and the Zambia National Commission for UNESCO. For these reasons, Brazil co-sponsored the amendment.
26. The delegation of **India** supported the amendment.
27. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked Zambia for submitting the nomination file for this beautiful element. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its analysis of the file, and if it had any doubts, particularly concerning criterion R.3, the clarifications provided by Zambia were satisfactory. Hence, it supported the amendment proposed. It also congratulated Zambia for the beautiful film which accompanied the nomination file.
28. The delegation of **Germany** was particularly interested in dance in all its facets, including the Kalela practised in Zambia. It thanked Zambia for the satisfactory explanations provided and expressed support for the inscription of the element, co-sponsoring the amendment. The delegation asked the Evaluation Body how other forms of dialogue could be adopted that might be facilitated, making it more understandable and clearer for partners who, as explained by Zambia, faced challenges depending on where they are in the world.
29. The **Chairperson**invited the Evaluation Body to respond.
30. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** recalled that the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body had already emphasized that the dialogue process is used to address a direct, short simple question to the State Party, to clarify a point with a direct answer. It cannot be used to add information to the file, which can only be added when the file is referred to the State Party. The Evaluation Body cannot therefore include information. It re-evaluates the file after the question is answered through the dialogue process. All States Parties have an equal opportunity to answer the question posed.
31. The **Secretary** further explained that this issue arose during the long process of reflection in the reform of the listing mechanisms, that is, how information can be presented given the diversity of contexts. Indeed, there was a recommendation that not only written forms of information can be provided, but other forms such as video materials, voice recordings and so on. The Secretary surmised that these reforms would take about two years to materialize, and the Committee was currently working with the older system. It should therefore be possible for communities to express themselves in other ways than in written forms. This process was therefore foreseen, and the Secretariat was working on this mechanism, the results of which may be seen in 2024 when the Committee will be able to appreciate whether or not some of these reforms will have an effect.
32. The delegation of **Slovakia** welcomed this file in this year’s cycle, thanking Zambia for its exhaustive and clear additional information. It particularly welcomed the useful clarification on the context of the elaboration of the file. It therefore supported the amendment by Botswana and the inscription of the file.
33. The delegation of **Angola** thanked the Evaluation Body for its work and comments, and Botswana for its amendments, which it co-sponsored. It expressed satisfaction with Zambia’s explanation and supported the inscription of Kalela dance, which will enrich the Representative List and constitute a step towards balancing this List.
34. The delegation of **Panama** thanked the Secretary for the good news, adding that the technical explanations provided by the Evaluation Body on the file showed the importance of implementing state cultural policies. Indeed, it was one thing to have legislation, but public policy has to foster community participation. The delegation believed that the communities had indeed participated in the preparation of the file.
35. The delegation of **Peru** took careful note of the different points put forward by Zambia and found the explanations satisfactory. It thus supported the amendment by Botswana.
36. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** was also satisfied with additional information provided and fully supported the amendment by Botswana and supported by others.
37. The delegation of **Paraguay** also lent its support to the amendment proposed by Botswana and the beautiful Kalela dance.
38. The **Chairperson** took note of the Members that co-sponsored the amendment: Botswana, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Morocco, Mauritania, Rwanda, Switzerland, Brazil, India, Germany, Malaysia, Slovakia, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. Indeed, as mentioned, it was wonderful to be able to adopt this element, the only African element presented during this session. The Chairperson thanked the Members of the Committee for their support. Turning to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.35**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.35) **adopted to inscribe Kalela dance on the Representative List.**
39. The delegation of **Zambia** thanked all the Committee Members and countries from Africa and around the world that had lent their support to Kalela dance, one of Zambia’s dances. It thanked the Chairperson and the Committee for this huge achievement for Zambia.
40. In the momentary absence of theChairperson, the **Vice-Chairperson of Botswana** chaired the proceedings of the Committee.
41. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Behzad’s style of miniature art** [draft decision 7.b.36] submitted by **Afghanistan**. The tradition of miniature painting involves the painting of small, yet highly detailed, colourful and intricate figures and scenes which tell stories of social challenges, economic issues and myths of the region, using pencils, brushes, natural pigments and gold or silver leaves. The Evaluation Body considered that the information provided was not sufficient to satisfy all five criteria. The file did not provide sufficient details on the social function and cultural meanings of the element in the present day nor provide any proof of the participation of the communities concerned in elaborating and implementing the safeguarding measures. For these reasons, unfortunately, the Body recommended that this nomination be referred to the submitting State.
42. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.36**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.36) **adopted to refer Behzad’s style of miniature art** **to the submitting State.**
43. The delegation of **Afghanistan** noted the concerns raised by the Evaluation Body with regard to the incomplete file, which will be taken into consideration. With the technical support of the UNESCO Chair of Weimar University in Germany, Afghanistan will carry out the work necessary for the inscription of the file for the upcoming cycle.
44. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving** [draft decision 7.b.37] submitted by **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Türkiye, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**. Sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving involves a series of practices that include traditional knowledge, practices, skills and crafts of the communities concerned related to growing mulberry trees, breeding silkworms and producing silk threads for weaving and other purposes. After initiating a dialogue process on criteria R.3 and R.4 related to the participation of the communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that all five criteria were met and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
45. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.37**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.37) **adopted to inscribe Sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Türkiye** expressed gratitude to the Committee and the Evaluation Body for the inscription of the multinational nomination file of Sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving on the Representative List. In all submitting States, silk culture includes the whole process from sericulture to end silk products, with its transmission conducted mostly through master-apprentice relationships for centuries. In all submitting States, silk producers are mostly villagers who work cooperatively and have special ceremonies for silk when it is produced. As a symbol of cultural diversity, the inscription of the element is a great opportunity to encourage all submitting States to safeguard it. The delegation thanked its partners from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for their efforts in the preparation process.
2. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** joined the delegations of Türkiye, Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in expressing its deep gratitude to the Committee for inscribing sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving on the Representative List. Its inscription will allow for greater dialogue between communities and practitioners of the submitting States. Deeply rooted in the traditions of the Great Silk Road, the element is an expression of cultural identity and centuries-old traditions. This inscription will further stimulate exchanges between countries and enhance intercultural cooperation, one of the core principles of the 2003 Convention. Azerbaijan thanked the Evaluation Body and Committee for the excellent job and careful analysis of the multinational nomination and looked forward to other joint nominations with the countries of the region.
3. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Raï, popular folk song of Algeria** [draft decision 7.b.38] submitted by **Algeria**. Raï is a form of folk music that is performed at ritual festivals and weddings throughout Algeria. A means of conveying social reality without taboos or censorship, raï music addresses themes such as love, freedom, despair and social constraint. After having initiated a process of dialogue on criterion R.3 relating to the participation of communities in the planning of the safeguarding measures, the Evaluation Body considered that the five criteria were satisfied and recommended the inscription of this element on the Representative List.
4. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.38**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.38) **adopted to inscribe Raï, popular folk song of Algeria** **on the Representative List.**
5. In a video address, a representative of **Algeria** spoke on behalf of the President of the Republic, Mr Abdelmadjid Tebboune, his Government and the Algerian people to express thanks to UNESCO for the inscription of this element. She thanked the Committee and the Evaluation Body for their rigorous expertise that led to this international recognition. Thanks were also conveyed to all the States that supported this nomination, as well as to the Secretariat for all its efforts and work in exchanging, listening and supporting Algeria. The country is committed to UNESCO’s work on culture and sought to amplify this further. Algeria welcomed with pride and honour the category 2 centre[[24]](#footnote-25) dedicated to intangible cultural heritage for the entire African continent. The inclusion of Raï, popular folk song of Algeria on the Representative List constitutes an act of recognition by the world of this cultural, artistic, poetic, musical and choreographic genre, which sends a message of sharing, friendship, love and peace to the world and humanity. The message delivered by this popular song is transmitted from generation to generation and recreated continuously as a witness of tumults and bliss, lending breadth and scope with the words and soul of the people. Raï draws its percussion from the ancestral terracotta ‘guellal’ and its breadth from the ‘guesba’ in reeds in melodies and harmonies as it travels alongside other majestic cultural genres of the world.
6. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Lipizzan horse breeding traditions** [draft decision 7.b.40] submitted by **Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia** and **Slovenia**. The element represents the knowledge, practices and skills relating to the breeding, caring and training of Lipizzan horses. The element is linked to a range of cultural and social practices involving the Lipizzan horses and entails the craftsmanship associated with horse breeding. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and highly appreciated the close collaboration in the preparation of the file that serves as a good example for a multinational nomination. The file demonstrates close collaboration in line with the 2003 Convention and shows the meaning and aim of multinational files. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended inscription of the element on the Representative List.
7. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.40**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.40) **adopted to inscribe Lipizzan horse breeding traditions** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Slovenia** spoke on behalf of the eight countries – Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – that had joined forces to highlight the wide range of cultural and social practices, knowledge and skills, oral traditions, festive events and equestrian sports linked to the breeding of Lipizzan horses. For centuries, the element has always united bearers, practitioners and communities across Europe. They are the first caretakers of Lipizzan horse breeding based on a trusting bond between human and horse, and of a shared cultural heritage that is jointly safeguarded across linguistic and national borders, thereby promoting dialogue and understanding. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its positive recommendation, acknowledging the strong collaboration among the States that resulted in an exemplary nomination file. Furthermore, it thanked the Committee for its decision that instilled pride among the submitting States Parties. The short film illustrated the rich, symbolic and vivid element that now belongs to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
2. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Timber rafting** [draft decision 7.b.41] submitted by **Austria, Czechia, Germany, Latvia, Poland** and **Spain**. Timber rafting refers to the traditional knowledge and skills related to the construction and navigation of timber rafts on midland waters. The practice includes constructing the rafts, transporting logs, and knowledge of nature. The tradition has been cultivated for generations and remains strong thanks to continuous oral communication, observation and participation, including through youth camps, local schools, festivals and workshops. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The Evaluation Body also highly appreciated the close collaboration in the preparation of the file, serving as an exemplary multinational nomination.
3. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.41**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.41) **adopted to inscribe Timber rafting** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of thanks on behalf of the communities]*

1. The delegation of **Poland** expressed deep appreciation to Morocco for its hospitality, congratulating the Chairperson and all the Vice-Chairpersons for their very able and skilful leadership of this session. It was also grateful to all the colleagues from Spain, Germany, Czechia, Latvia and Austria for their excellent cooperation and friendship that resulted in the inscription of timber rafting. [Second speaker] Ms Joanna Cicha-Kuczyńska, the file coordinator, spoke on behalf of the six countries to thank the Committee for the inscription of Timber rafting on the Representative List. This is a significant moment following several years of joint effort, discussions and multinational cooperation culminating in the inscription of the tradition, which respects natural resources and has close links with the sustainable use of nature. The Convention highlights international perspectives of mutual understanding and cooperation in safeguarding traditions transmitted from generation to generation. It was her great honour and privilege to work with the bearers whose devotion to the tradition was very moving and hopeful for the next generation. As the coordinator, she thanked them for their support, understanding, openness, teamwork and readiness to share their experiences, knowledge and awareness of the importance of the local environment and communities.
2. The **Vice-Chairperson** congratulated all the States Parties on their inscriptions, reminding the delegates of the side events. He adjourned the morning session.

*[Thursday, 1 December, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 7.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

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

1. The **Vice-Chairperson of** **Switzerland** welcomed the delegates to the afternoon session, noting that the Committee had completed its examination of seventeen nominations for inscription on the Representative List in the morning session. She congratulated all the States that had inscribed elements on the Representative List, with four nominations left to consider.
2. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Pehlevanliq culture: traditional zorkhana games, sports and wrestling** [draft decision 7.b.42] submitted by **Azerbaijan**. The culture of Pehlevans (pehlevanliq) refers to a variety of traditional physical performances, training and competitions practised and transmitted from generation to generation by ‘pehlevans’ (traditional athletes/wrestlers). It includes zorkhana games and sports, pehlevan wrestling, pehlevan performances at outdoor celebrations, and various popular events. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explained that the element contributes to improving health and enhancing physical and mental well-being. The proposed safeguarding measures were prepared with the involvement of the communities concerned from the early stages of the preparation of the nomination. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended inscription of the element.
3. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.42**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.42) **adopted to inscribe Pehlevanliq culture: traditional zorkhana games, sports and wrestling** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Committee for inscribing Pehlevanliq culture: traditional zorkhana games, sports and wrestling on the Representative List and commended the Evaluation Body for the evaluation of this file. This inscription will raise awareness about the diversity of forms of intangible heritage in Azerbaijan that continue to be transmitted from generation to generation. The culture of Pehlevanliq promotes social cohesion and integration among communities. It also plays an integral part in folk events and celebrations held outdoors, thus contributing to social integration and encouraging solidarity among community members. Communities in Azerbaijan perceive Pehlevanliq culture as one of the most important aspects of their heritage. For centuries, pehlevans have been a symbol of strength, power and invincibility, giving a sense of pride and honour to local communities. The delegation thanked all the stakeholders involved in the preparation of this file, especially the Ministry of Culture, Azerbaijan’s Zorkhana federation and the Azerbaijan National Sports Association, as well as the pehlevans who made huge efforts to focus on safeguarding the element and will now partner to safeguard and keep the element alive for future generations.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Telling tradition of Nasreddin Hodja/ Molla Nesreddin/ Molla Ependi/ Apendi/ Afendi Kozhanasyr Anecdotes** [draft decision 7.b.43] submitted by **Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan** and **Uzbekistan**. The element involves social practices, oral traditions and festivals relating to the tradition of telling anecdotes based around Nasreddin, a philosopher and wiseman recognized for his wisdom and humorous analyses and representations of society and life experiences. The anecdotes are transmitted through oral tradition and written sources, and have inspired local idioms and proverbs. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file explained that the element carries a social function, as it enhances cultural ties between generations and is practised at family meetings, weddings and café sessions. The element has become a common means of communication today and serves as an expression of social memory. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended its inscription on the Representative List.
2. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.b.43**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.43) **adopted to inscribe Telling tradition of Nasreddin Hodja/ Molla Nesreddin/ Molla Ependi/ Apendi/ Afendi Kozhanasyr Anecdotes** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Türkiye** expressed deep gratitude to the Committee and Evaluation Body as coordinator on behalf of the participating States for the inscription of the nomination file to the Representative List. The Telling tradition of Nasreddin Hodja/ Molla Nesreddin/ Molla Ependi/ Apendi/ Afendi Kozhanasyr Anecdotes is an element of social practices and festivals related to the tradition of telling anecdotes of Nasreddin. Communities enrich conversations with his anecdotes and support speeches with his witticisms. The delegation thanked all the stakeholders from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for the preparation process. The file is an example of successful international cooperation and the result of strong commitment among the participating States. It was hoped that the inscription will inspire countries to safeguard shared living heritage.
2. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** joined all the submitting States in thanking the Committee for its decision to inscribe Telling tradition of Nasreddin anecdotes. The communities perceive the Molla Nesreddin anecdotes as an integral part of their culture. They carry a wealth of traditions, very diverse in themselves. It has transformed into one of the symbols of intangible cultural heritage in communities across the region, an element of cultural memory and serving as a strong marker of cultural belonging. Transmitted from generation to generation, the telling tradition of Molla Nesreddin anecdotes goes beyond ethnic and religious boundaries. This inscription is the result of the hard work and cooperation of an excellent team of experts that coordinated the preparation of the file. The delegation was grateful to all stakeholders, ministries and community organizations, which lent support to the preparation of the file. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its careful evaluation of this multinational nomination and looked forward to other joint nominations with the countries of the region.
3. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and social interaction** [draft decision 7.b.44] submitted by **Azerbaijan** and **Türkiye**. Tea culture in Azerbaijan and Türkiye is an important social practice that shows hospitality, builds and maintains social ties, and is used to celebrate important moments in the lives of communities. Tea culture is an essential part of daily life for all layers of society, providing a strong sense of cultural identity. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria. The file demonstrated that the element promotes friendly relations between people and is associated with various social events in both countries. The element enhances sustainable development by following the principles of sustainable agriculture and the use of eco-friendly materials. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended inscription of the element on the Representative List.
4. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM.7.b.44**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.44) **adopted to inscribe Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and social interaction** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Türkiye** expressed gratitude for the inscription of the joint nomination file of Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and social interaction to the Representative List. It thanked the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their excellent work. Tea culture in Azerbaijan and Türkiye is an important social practice that shows hospitality, builds and maintains social ties, and is used to celebrate important moments in the lives of communities. Tea culture is an essential part of daily life for all layers of society, providing a strong sense of cultural identity, and representing knowledge, traditions and skills linked to cultivating, preparing and drinking tea by communities in Türkiye and Azerbaijan. Through tea culture, communities celebrate important moments, build and maintain social relationships, and use tea serving and drinking as a cornerstone of socialization and expressions of hospitality. The delegation thanked the stakeholders and Azerbaijan. The file preparation process was an excellent example of teamwork with Azerbaijani colleagues. It was hoped that inscription will increase dialogue and create new opportunities among the related bearers and practitioners in the submitting States.
2. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** joined Türkiye in expressing deep gratitude to the Committee for inscribing Culture of Çay (tea), a symbol of identity, hospitality and social interaction on the Representative List. This is an historical moment for the whole of Azerbaijani society to see this living culture recognized at the international level and jointly with the communities from Türkiye. This inscription celebrates the unity and diversity of the heritage for the sake of mutual respect and dialogue among communities. Tea culture is an essential part of social and cultural life and an important social practice aimed at showing hospitality, celebrating important moments in the lives of communities, helping them to build and maintain social relationships and enjoy moments by drinking tea for social exchange and interaction. This nomination represented an exemplary form of contribution towards enhancing international cooperation, one of the core principles of this Convention. It will further reinforce measures to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in both countries and will support awareness-raising and the implementation of the Convention. Azerbaijan thanked Türkiye and the Evaluation Body for the excellent job of coordinating this nomination and its careful consideration.
3. The delegation of **Türkiye** announced a side event where this delicious tea would be served.
4. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the final nomination, **Straw weaving in Belarus, art, craft and skills** [draft decision 7.b.45] submitted by **Belarus**. Straw weaving in Belarus is a combination of knowledge, skills and artistic techniques for processing cereal straw to create items that serve as interior decorations. Various utensils (such as boxes and baskets), headgear, toys and accessories are made from straw. Some products have special meaning, such as the harvest wreaths or *pawuks*, complex diamond-shaped structures believed to protect the household from evil and diseases. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination met all five criteria and recommended inscription.
5. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** **[17.COM 7.b.45](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.b.45)** **adopted to inscribe Straw weaving in Belarus, art, craft and skills** **on the Representative List.**
6. The delegation of **Belarus** expressed sincerest gratitude for supporting the inscription of Straw weaving in Belarus, art, craft and skills. It is a special day for the masters who keep the traditional skills of straw weaving and knowledge alive, as received from parents and mentors from generation to generation. The community work in unity and this traditional craft is important to masters of straw weaving and for Belarus. It was pleased to receive such high recognition for its cultural tradition at the international level. It was also a responsibility to safeguard this element for its sustainable development. Belarus would do its utmost to preserve this tradition for future generations.

*[A video of the element was shown]*

**ITEM 7.c OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/7.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.c-EN.docx)

*See* [*5 proposals*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7c-register-01283)

1. The **Vice-Chairperson of Switzerland** turned to agenda item 7.c and the examination of proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
2. The **Secretary** noted that theCommittee would examine five proposals for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices: the proposal submitted by Czechia, the joint proposal by Italy, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus and France, followed by the proposal from Kuwait, the joint proposal from Portugal and Spain, and finally the proposal from Bosnia and Herzegovina. He recalled that the Committee is asked to evaluate the extent to which the proposals best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention. It was not necessary, however, that the evaluation satisfy every criterion for the proposal to be selected. There are nine criteria. The purpose of this Register is to select effective safeguarding practices for dissemination and possible replication elsewhere. The criteria were projected onto the screens.
3. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the first proposal, **Strategy for safeguarding traditional crafts: The Bearers of Folk Craft Tradition programme** [draft decision 7.c.1] submitted by **Czechia**. The proposed programme aims to support, protect and safeguard traditional crafts. It addresses various challenges faced by traditional crafts, including the decline of such crafts, the poor financial situation of craft workshops and the abandonment of traditional models. The programme helps to raise awareness of traditional crafts and their technologies, boost their prestige and encourage society-wide recognition of craft producers and artisans. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination represented a well-prepared and well-written file with a safeguarding model that can be adapted to other settings of traditional crafts-making facing similar challenges. For these reasons, the Evaluation Body recommended to select it as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention.
4. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.c.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.c.1) **adopted to select Strategy for safeguarding traditional crafts: The Bearers of Folk Craft Tradition programme to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
5. The delegation of **Czechia** explained that the Bearers of Folk Craft Tradition programme was inspired by the successful UNESCO project, Living Human Treasures. For Czechia, this is the first selection in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It appreciated it all the more because it confirms that safeguarding procedures can inspire other States Parties. It is an appreciation not only of this work but also of the project for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. At present, eighty-one folk crafts people hold the title ‘Bearer of Folk Craft Tradition’, which the delegation wished to thank. They consider the inscription to be a public recognition of their contribution to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and its transmission to future generations. They, as well as the State authorities, guarantee the sustainability of the programme and are ready to share their experience, while looking forward to exchanges with other countries devoted to safeguarding their traditional crafts. The delegation invited delegates to the International Folklore Festival in the town of Strážnice from 23–25 June, where the bearers will present their crafts, as they do every year. This time it will be the occasion to celebrate the success of the programme in association with the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention.
6. The **Vice-Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next proposal, **Tocatì, a shared programme for the safeguarding of traditional games and sports** [draft decision 7.c.2] submitted by **Italy, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus** and **France**. Tocatì is a shared programme for the safeguarding of traditional games and sports that has been developed over the years through the efforts of an international network of communities, groups and individuals. Tocatì has evolved to become a permanent year-round programme that encourages the exchange of knowledge, practices, skills and projects. Since 2016, annual international seminars and workshops have taken place, creating opportunities to identify and discuss safeguarding priorities and good practices across the submitting States Parties. The Body considered that the nomination is a well-prepared file demonstrating strong community engagement and support for the programme in the safeguarding of their collective intangible heritage at a large scale. The Evaluation Body recommended to select it as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention.
7. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.c.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.c.2) **adopted to select Tocatì, a shared programme for the safeguarding of traditional games and sports** **to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
8. The delegation of **Italy** spoke on behalf of the countries with which it shared this path: Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia and France. It thanked the Government and people of Morocco for their warm welcome and the organization of this session, and thanked the Evaluation Body for its appreciation of the communities’ support for the programme to safeguard their collective intangible cultural heritage. The preparation of this file had presented an opportunity to cooperate effectively and concretely to best protect and transform traditional games and sports. It is an emotion and an honour to speak on behalf of all the friends, colleagues and representatives of Belgian, Cypriot, Croatian, French and Italian communities, the Veneto region and all the institutions that were united behind the nomination coordinated by the ministries of culture and the ministries of foreign affairs.
9. The **President** **of the Associazione Giochi Antichi**spokeon behalf of the communities of traditional games and sports, and all the actors of the Tocatí programme in Italy, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia and France. He thanked the players, women and men, friends and fellow travellers gathered around a common goal: to safeguard their intangible and living heritage. The large network is made up of a constellation of organizations, local groups, associations, sports federations, and international associations, such as the European Traditional Sports and Games Association, which has always been the beacon, and the international association which led the initiative to share the values of traditional games on a global level, beyond the borders of Europe. Thanks went to local and regional institutions, such as the municipality of Verona, the Veneto region, universities, museums, associations, accredited non-governmental organizations, researchers and intangible cultural heritage facilitators who have guided these steps. He also thanked the national institutions for their trust, support and coordination. The inclusion of Tocatí in the Register of Good Practices strengthened action in the wider UNESCO community. Games and players will help meet new challenges to make intangible heritage an instrument of dialogue between cultures for the well-being for communities and peace between peoples.

*[A video of the programme was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next proposal, **Al Sadu Educational Programme: Train the trainers in the art of weaving** [draft decision 7.c.3] submitted by **Kuwait**. The main objective of the Al Sadu Educational Programme is to safeguard the national intangible cultural heritage of Al Sadu as a traditional art of weaving and to ensure the transmission of the knowledge and skills of traditional weaving to younger generations via the public education system. The programme’s safeguarding measures involve training through hands-on learning, presentations, audio-visual materials, and a manual aid for teachers, among others. The programme also involves re-evaluation of the curriculum, which takes place every two years. The Evaluation Body recommended to select programme as best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention.
2. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.c.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.c.3) **adopted to select Al Sadu Educational Programme: Train the trainers in the art of weaving** **to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
3. The delegation of **Kuwait** thanked and congratulated Morocco for its great opening ceremony, hospitality and perfect organization of this seventeenth session, thanking the Vice-Chairperson and the Chairperson for their leadership. Today is a very special day for Kuwait for two reasons. Firstly, this was the first solo nomination submitted by Kuwait. Secondly, this is the first nomination to be selected for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in the Arab world. On behalf of the State of Kuwait and the Al Sadu Society, the delegation extended thanks and deepest gratitude for the inscription of Al Sadu Educational Programme: Train the trainers in the art of weaving on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its positive evaluation of the nomination file and the Committee for its endorsement of this inscription, as well as every person who made this inscription possible. This inscription illustrates the extent of respect and protection of traditions in Kuwait with the aim of ensuring the viability and transmission of its intangible cultural heritage. Kuwait will continue to safeguard its heritage and hoped that this first solo inscription will be the first in a long list.
4. The delegation of **Kuwait** [Second speaker]Ms Bibi Al Sabah was proud to represent the first Arab nation to have its national file registered as a Good Safeguarding Practice. Al Sadu weaving element has now been inscribed, accredited and registered with the Convention. The preservation and documentation efforts on weaving techniques and design patterns helped to secure the inscription of Al Sadu weaving on the Representative List in 2020 in a joint file with Saudi Arabia. Innovation efforts to adapt the craft function and the creation of a cooperative structure secured the accreditation of Al Sadu Society as a non-governmental organization in 2022. Finally, the educational programmes and knowledge transfer initiatives led to today’s registration. With the support of 40 years of experience and of the over 40,000 school students who have benefitted from this transfer of knowledge and expertise, as well as of the 400 Al Sadu members and affiliates and of UNESCO’s expertise, Kuwait will continue these safeguarding practices for present and future generations. On behalf of Al Sadu Society, the delegation thanked the Committee and the Evaluation Body for their endorsement and acknowledgment.

*[A video of the programme was shown]*

1. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the next proposal, **Portuguese-Galician border ICH: a safeguarding model created by Ponte...nas ondas!** [draft decision 7.c.4] submitted by **Portugal** and **Spain**. The project aims to safeguard intangible cultural heritage on the Portuguese-Galician border by creating spaces in which the heritage can be practised and transmitted to younger generations. The project started in 1995 when a group of school teachers from various primary and secondary schools on both sides of the border decided to work together to maintain, transmit and provide contexts to keep the heritage culture of their borderland alive. The Evaluation Body considered that the nomination represented a well-prepared and well-written file highlighting the involvement of communities, groups and individuals in the safeguarding of shared intangible cultural heritage that can be found across borders. The Evaluation Body recommended to select it as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention.
2. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.c.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.c.4) **adopted to select Portuguese-Galician border ICH: a safeguarding model created by Ponte...nas ondas!** **to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**

*[A video of the project was shown]*

1. The delegation of **Portugal**conveyed thanks to the authorities of Morocco for the generous welcome extended to the participants, as well as for the excellent organization of this meeting. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its in-depth work on all the files presented for inclusion in the Register during this session. The Ponte...nas ondas! project (Bridge over the waves) is a cross-border project that has existed for more than 25 years and involves around 300 schools in the Minho-Galicia cross-border region. In school curricula, it seeks to promote the living heritage of these communities. Around 5,000 students and 3,000 teachers and their families form the nucleus of this project, in addition to the bearers and practitioners of these traditions and the researchers, specialists and universities of the region. The participation of local media, especially radio stations, has been a very relevant and highly valued aspect throughout this project. The preservation of local traditions from generation to generation has been a constant of this project and should also be seen as a model for cross-border cooperation by combining living heritage, school curricula, dissemination of information and social and digital media. The delegation thanked all those responsible for this project.
2. The **Director General of Culture of Spain** thanked the Evaluation Body and the Committee for this registration that unites two key pillars of UNESCO, that is, culture and education. This project is a cross-border project and a bridge between Spain and Portugal, a continuous bridge of cooperation and collaboration. They have become one.
3. The **Representative of the community from Spain** thanked the Committee and the Evaluation Body for this registration. For twenty-seven years, as a teacher he spoke of the bridge that was created using intangible cultural heritage from both sides of the border, giving a voice to young people in Spain and Portugal. He thanked the bearer communities of both sides of the border. Since the Middle Ages, these communities have shared songs, oral traditional *cantigas*. They have transmitted this intangible cultural heritage involving many generations. Above all, the project wished to share its model with the Committee and invite other countries to incorporate the Ponte...nas ondas! model into their programmes.
4. The **Representative of the association Ponte… nas ondas!** **from Portugal** greeted all the delegates and thanked the Evaluation Body for registering the model ‘Ponte...nas ondas!’ in the Register of Good Practices. The singularity of this nomination lay in the fact that it was born in the schools of northern Portugal and Galicia. Working with students and teachers made cooperation possible, breaking down barriers and strengthening bonds of friendship and mutual respect. The heritage of a country is the heritage of all and must therefore be preserved for new generations. She thanked the Committee for the confidence granted and gave a very special thanks to the students and to all those who collaborated on this project.
5. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the final proposal, **Nevesinje Olympics, traditional games** [draft decision 7.c.5] submitted by **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. The file defines The Nevesinje Olympics, traditional games as a significant traditional sporting event held in the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Evaluation Body noted that the file does not describe a specific programme, project or activity, how the priorities were identified and established, nor the primary object of the programme or project. Instead, the Nevesinje Olympics are described as an intangible cultural heritage element and not as programme, project or activity that can serve as a good model for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in general. In addition, the file very clearly explains that the Nevesinje Olympics will be, “nominated as a good practice on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity” which contradicts the current nomination to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended to not select it as a programme, project or activity best reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention and to refer it to the submitting State.
6. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that no amendments or requests for debate had been received and therefore turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.c.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.c.5) **adopted to refer Nevesinje Olympics, traditional games** **to the submitting State.**
7. The delegation of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** thanked the Evaluation Body for its recommendations. It would work on improving the file together with its experts, bearers of the element, local communities and responsible ministries so that it can resubmit the file to the Committee for examination in the following cycle. The delegation assured the Committee of its commitment to the implementation of the Convention.

**ITEM 7.d OF THE AGENDA:**

**EXAMINATION OF REQUESTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/7.d*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7.d-EN.docx)

*See* [*request*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7d-international-assistance-01284)

1. The **Vice-Chairperson**thanked Bosnia and Herzegovina, noting that the Committee had completed its examination of the proposals submitted for the Register of Good Practices under agenda item 7.c. She then turned to agenda item 7.d and the examination of requests for International Assistance, followed by the general debate concerning the report of the Evaluation Body and the examination of draft decision 17.COM 7. The sole request under this sub-item was submitted by Malawi. The Vice-Chairperson recalled that it was not necessary to meet each of the criteria to grant International Assistance, and the Committee was asked to assess the extent to which this request met the criteria as a whole.
2. The **Chairperson** **of the** **Evaluation Body** presented the request, **Safeguarding of ludodiversity in Malawi through formal and nonformal education** [draft decision 7.d] submitted by Malawi. The objective of this three-year project is to safeguard nine traditional games through the implementation of activities such as undertaking studies, documentation, curriculum improvement, apprenticeship, creation of groups and awareness-raising. The Evaluation Body considered that the three-year project to be implemented by the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO would improve the viability of the element and of living heritage in general and would increase the transmission among young people. In conclusion, the Evaluation Body recommended to approve the International Assistance request from Malawi and to grant the amount requested to the State Party.
3. The **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 7.d**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7.d) **adopted to grant International Assistance to Malawi for the amount of US$305,144**.
4. The delegation of **Malawi** spoke on behalf of the Government of Malawi and the practising communities to thank the Committee for its positive evaluation of its International Assistance request for the Safeguarding of ludodiversity in Malawi through formal and non-formal education. It thanked the Secretariat for the guidance provided during the initial assessment of the file. A great number of traditional games of Malawi are found throughout the country and yet they are not well known due to lack of popularization. However, these games can be revitalized and promoted if further supported. The communities had been waiting for this project since 2013, when they first carried out an inventory of traditional games, which was added to the Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Malawi. In that exercise, communities under the Traditional Games Association provided information that was used to complete the application form for this request. The resources provided by this project will go a long way in revitalizing and promoting the viability of traditional games of Malawi. The communities, whose traditional games will benefit from this assistance, were truly grateful.

**ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2022**

1. The **Vice-Chairperson**returned to thegeneral debate under agenda item 7 on the report of the Evaluation Body.
2. The delegation of **Switzerland** began by congratulating the communities, bearers and submitting States who had their elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention in the past two days. The diversity and richness of living heritage was once again demonstrated and celebrated during these inscriptions. During the examination of the nominations, there were many comments concerning the role and mission of the Evaluation Body. The delegation considered that this Body and its expertise played a central role in the Convention. Indeed, it is elected by the Committee and represents all the regions in an equitable manner, working according to the rules that the Committee had set. The delegation reiterated that for the credibility of this Committee and the Convention it was crucial that the Committee base its decisions on expertise. The dialogue process gave rise to many questions and remarks. It was recalled that this process was established as a technical mechanism for short questions and answers available to the Evaluation Body. However, it observed that a more systematic use of this dialogue procedure was more broadly requested within the Committee. Given the work carried out for two years to propose a revision of the Operational Directives and the fact that these new rules have just come into force, it was perhaps too early to start a new reform.
3. The delegation of **Switzerland** believed, however, that in the mid-term, it was necessary to encourage the Evaluation Body to make full use of its leeway to initiate dialogue procedures as often as possible. In this regard, it supported an amendment that would be proposed by Brazil. During the discussions, it was noted that the quality of certain multinational nominations could still be improved, in particular, in the preparation and implementation of common safeguarding measures. The delegation reiterated its request to the Secretariat, already reflected in Decision [15.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/8), paragraph 8, to prepare a guidance note for the preparation of multinational files. As was frequently mentioned during this session, capacity-building and international assistance are tools of choice to support the preparation of nomination files. In this sense, it welcomed and supported an amendment that would be proposed by Sweden to allow the allocation of International Assistance for the preparation of a first nomination to the Representative List. Switzerland recalled the responsibility of this Committee with regard to inscriptions on the Lists. On the one hand, it can rely on assessments and expertise to form the basis of its decisions, and on the other hand, it has the leeway necessary to consider other aspects in its decisions. Indeed, this was behind the principle of the working agreement, which helped maintain a balance without jeopardizing the credibility of the Convention.
4. The delegation of **Brazil** thanked the Evaluation Body for its great effort and outstanding work, which brought about an important reflection for the future of the Convention. Brazil informed the Committee that it had amended its initial amendment. It had realized that other Members of the Committee shared its concerns, thanking them for their interesting feedback. The delegation found that its new proposal reflected the major discussions over the last few days and addressed the important issues raised. The two major issues discussed were geographical imbalance and the necessity to have an evaluation process that is more focused on the element itself rather than on forms, which it hoped was captured in the two new paragraphs proposed. It also suggested a minor adjustment in the text of paragraph 12 to convey more positive language.
5. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated the countries and communities that had inscribed their elements, adding that it was great to see these living traditions from all over the world. However, the delegation was concerned about the confrontational attitude behind certain decisions with the apparent aim of dividing the Committee, which harms the Convention and its universality. Broad support for an option that results in a decision in accordance with the Rules of Procedure does not mean that a consensus was reached. Even minority voices are important and deserve to be treated seriously because they are never motivated by bias or bad will, and they are always open to dialogue. The delegation was very disappointed that the working agreement had not been respected during this session because it is a good method of work that had proved itself, and which helped improve files and leads to better safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It regretted that within the Committee it did not have the common understanding that the referral option in no way represents an unfavourable evaluation of the element itself, but rather an opportunity for communities to present their elements in a way that is understandable to all. In this cycle, several files had been revised and inscribed. This approach is unfair to the communities that had invested the extra effort to bring their nominations into line with the rules that the Committee itself has established, nor was it fair to the Evaluation Body because it gave the impression that ultimately the Body is expected to find a way to evaluate all the files positively. In addition, the whole room and virtual space is full of observers who attentively follow the Committee’s work and to whom incoherent messages are conveyed, which damage the credibility of the Committee. The global reflection on the listing mechanisms, however, has just been completed and the Committee is constantly improving its working methods. The delegation recalled that countries with fewer elements inscribed benefit from a global network of facilitators and accredited non-governmental organizations, and from a capacity-building network which includes assistance in the preparation of files. The delegation concluded by expressing support for the work of the Evaluation Body and the work of experts, which should be the basis of all decisions. It supported the examination of more files, for dialogue to be used systematically, the simplification of the nomination forms, and the strong recognition of the work of the Evaluation Body and its recommendations.
6. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked the Evaluation Body for its outstanding efforts, fully cognizant of its monumental and demanding task. Along the same lines as Brazil, it noted that over the last days of discussions, there were instances in which there were elements that were worthy of inscription but did not have sufficiently strong documentation, such as Zambia’s submission, which received a lot of support owing to the vibrancy of the element itself. There are some elements that are strong on their own merits, while others sometimes receive positive recommendations based on high-quality documentation. The lesson here is that the Committee should always focus on the culture itself as a living expression of a tradition and then devise the appropriate mechanisms that will enable the Evaluation Body to guarantee that their evaluations are as objective as possible.
7. The delegation of **Slovakia** congratulated all the countries that had their intangible cultural heritage elements inscribed during this session, thanking the Evaluation Body for its excellent and indispensable expert work. It agreed with the suggestions made by Committee Members throughout the discussions on how to improve working methods in order to enhance transparency, inclusiveness and the evaluation process. The delegation particularly welcomed the initiative on defining possible ways to use external sources in a transparent and democratic way. As mentioned by the Secretary, this process has already been approved within the framework of the listing mechanisms and its impact should soon be seen. We live in a time with an overwhelming amount of easily accessible sources of information, but there is the challenge of selection and orientation. Everything is on the web, but to find the correct information in the online space is often challenging. Moreover, the information is of varied quality and reliability. This is why the Committee should devise a systematic way, with guidelines, on working with external sources during the Evaluation Body’s evaluation process, which could help understand the elements of intangible cultural heritage in all their complexity and diversity. Moreover, there are other ways of supporting the preparation of nomination files, even before they enter the phase of evaluation by the Body and the Committee. Slovakia stood ready to cooperate on a bilateral level to accompany the nomination process of interested States Parties. It also highlighted the usefulness of the Evaluation Body report in providing clear guidance to submitting States on the nomination process, including highlighting good examples and pointing out commonly made mistakes. Other possibilities include capacity-building and the expertise and support offered by accredited non-governmental organizations. The delegation thanked the States Parties that chose to withdraw their nomination files and decided to use the referral as an excellent opportunity to further work on their nominations, including working with the relevant stakeholders.
8. The delegation of **Peru** echoed the previous speakers in commending the Evaluation Body for its work in this cycle, and expressed congratulations to all the countries and communities that had their elements inscribed. It agreed with the observations by Members, particularly with regard to the criteria that need to be borne in mind when using the dialogue process. In this respect, the Committee Members can leave this meeting agreeing that the criteria need to be broadened, while determining what they are so that a better balance among the Lists of the Convention can be struck in the future. The delegation drew attention to comments made that could open the door to a process in which the dialogue process could be revised, as was carried out with the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. These two aspects could be improved in order to help strike a balance in the Lists, which will keep the Convention strong and relevant. The delegation remarked on the differences by which submitting States Parties prepared their nominations depending on the element in question. It was important to understand that there are different kinds of traditions across humanity. Some are better at the technical aspects than others, and it is sometimes difficult to get the technical aspects right to reflect the quality of every one of those traditions.
9. The delegation of **Panama** extended congratulations for all the inscriptions and conveyed thanks to the Evaluation Body for the enormous number of files evaluated and for confronting the doubts when evaluating the files. Indeed, there may be cases when the decision is split 50-50, but it was convinced that the remaining referrals were due to the shortfalls in the documentation. The delegation understood that there is a majority within the Evaluation Body, even if it is a slim majority, and it is thus very understandable that there are also differing opinions in the broader Committee. It is perfectly understandable that Members do not agree with everything that might be recommended by the Evaluation Body, which does not imply that the Committee does not wish for an eventual inscription; it is the process itself that requires tweaking. The delegation thus wished to see the dialogue process expanded, as this would mean that *post facto* dialogue would not see everything as either black or white. Otherwise, there will always be some members who seek a referral while others seek inscription. It means that the Evaluation Body will be able to focus firstly on whether the element conforms to R.1 and if it actually constitutes intangible cultural heritage prior to its evaluation. In some cases, there have been some discrepancies, for example, an element can have an excellent file but does not constitute intangible cultural heritage. The Secretariat and UNESCO need to create more spaces for post-evaluation dialogue to better understand certain aspects of the element so that the Committee and experts are confident of their positions. In this way, the Committee can be assured that the nomination files that reach it are already in a very strong position and have a good chance of being inscribed.
10. The **Vice-Chairperson**invited the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body to respond.
11. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body** fullyagreed with some of the observations. However, with regard to the process of evaluation, when the Body approves and submits a draft decision, it does not follow the majority criteria. Instead, the Body seeks to reach consensus on every decision. The Body does not vote, which means that all members agree with the draft decision after numerous discussions and exchanges of information, reading the files together several times. The Chairperson reiterated that draft decisions were therefore not approved through a vote or by a majority but reached through consensus. During this cycle, there was just one case where consensus was not reached, but in all the other cases, all the members agreed with the recommendations for referral or inscription of each file.
12. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body for the clarifications, opening the floor to the Observers.
13. The delegation of **Cuba** thanked the Evaluation Body and its Chairperson, remarking on their professionalism throughout the debates. Of course, it deferred on some points, but it fully acknowledged its professionalism at all times. Over the past few days, a few details had emerged on how some of the files were examined rather than the elements, and this deserved further examination. Indeed, the process cannot just become an examination of documents, as this would be detrimental. On the explanation by the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body that its members reach their decisions by consensus, the delegation remarked that the Body has a responsibility to clarify the file in order to then transmit this information to the Committee Members explaining the precise nature and significance of the element. Indeed, interpretation can vary according to regional differences, which called on the responsibility of the regional representatives in the Body so that the files are examined in an equitable way. The delegation believed that the Committee in Rabat could help clarify the relationship between the working agreement and the dialogue process. Indeed, it is important that the Committee be given the opportunity to examine the file during the session so as to consider geographic balance in the Lists, as reflected in the Operational Directives. Cuba supported the working agreement and the upstream dialogue process, which had proved its effectiveness. Moreover, it had also withdrawn files to respect the agreement. However, the time had come to review the agreement and strengthen the dialogue process.
14. The delegation of **Austria** thanked Morocco for organizing the Committee meeting and for its warm welcome, commending the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of the meeting documents, and the Evaluation Body for its commitment to this demanding task. Most importantly, the delegation congratulated all the people behind the elements recently inscribed. The new inscriptions will contribute to further emphasizing the great diversity and variety of living heritage. The delegation followed the dynamic discussions in the Committee on this item with great interest and witnessed some of the bearers present. The decisions taken will also have an impact on future debates concerning the Lists. As mentioned by several delegations, the discussions are always related to the files with the information provided by the submitting States, as the element itself is not being questioned. However, the Committee should make sure that the files present the practices of the communities in the best way possible, and that they are in line with the criteria set out for each of the Lists. Moreover, the Committee established the Evaluation Body to assist the Committee with this heavy task, which the Body carries out with great professionalism and diligence. With regard to the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, States Parties recently reaffirmed the importance of the Body’s work. During the same discussions, the States Parties also committed to the working agreement as a guiding principle for the Committee. These guidelines and criteria have proven very helpful to ensure a transparent process, and it would be of concern to disregard this method of working. The delegation acknowledged the success of upstream dialogue. Several questions on its implementation were raised during this session. It looked forward to seeing the full impact of this tool in the evaluation process, while exploring possibilities for amending it, depending on the available human and financial resources.
15. The delegation of **Djibouti**congratulated the communities whose elements had been inscribed, as well as the Evaluation Body for the work accomplished on the three listing mechanisms. It also thanked the Committee, congratulating them for their deep reflections on the evaluation of the documents and files, which provided different interpretations of the texts, an important point for discussion today. Sometimes post-decision explanations from the Committee have taken precedence over the recommended decisions of the Body, which has questioned the working agreement that was the rule in the past. The delegation recalled the sixteenth session, in particular, during which Djibouti had submitted a file that was referred, and whose referral it accepted. Indeed, the criteria needs to be further explained, as it created obstacles for taking into account the quality of documents and files, which only further strengthened the need to expand capacity building for communities. The delegation agreed that questions sometimes arise and that decisions formulated by the Evaluation Body constitute a consensus. However, a trend always emerged one way or another. It congratulated the Secretariat for its excellent work on the files and for its professionalism.
16. The delegation of **Argentina** thanked the Evaluation Body and commended the bearers and countries with elements inscribed. It supported the amendment put forward by Brazil and the need to support the dialogue process and capacity building.
17. The delegation of **Guatemala** congratulated the Evaluation Body for its work, acknowledging that it has a very broad responsibility. However, it was also important that the Evaluation Body strike a geographical balance when it comes to nominations. The dialogue process is a tool that can be necessary to complete information contained in the files. The delegation asked the Members of the Committee to consider drafting criteria that enable examinations to be carried out in a more equitable way. Guatemala fully supported and believes in the Convention and its power to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.
18. The delegation of **Ecuador** thanked Morocco for hosting this session, congratulating all the countries whose elements had been inscribed on the List. It thanked the Members of the Committee and the Evaluation Body for their comprehensive work in examining the files. On the subject of over-commercialization of products, the delegation remarked that safeguarding practices drawn up by bearer communities to ensure the survival of these manifestations must focus on crafts and foodways as intangible cultural heritage. New generations will inherit these practices, and if they do not see an economic future in these cultural expressions, they may not be interested in receiving the heritage transmitted to them.
19. The delegation of **Egypt** extended gratitude to the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their remarkable work, congratulating all the Member States whose files were inscribed on the Lists. Over the past few days, delegates witnessed many successful inscriptions and were delighted to have communities and practitioners sharing these moments. It commended the Committee for giving the opportunity to all nominating States to express their positions freely and to clarify specific points in an optic of equality. Egypt welcomed the idea of multinational files of shared elements and encouraged mutual dialogue between States in this regard. It agreed with many Committee Members and Observers regarding the need to improve geographical balance in the Lists. In this regard, the delegation stressed the importance of increasing capacity-building focused on the least-represented geographical regions in order to improve the quality of nomination files presented for inscriptions in the future, as well as to clarify specific points that might be misunderstood in the context of the implementation of the Convention. This should align with UNESCO’s existing priorities, specifically for the African continent, with the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022–2029,[[25]](#footnote-26) as well as for Small Developing Island States (SIDS).
20. With no further interventions, the **Vice-Chairperson** concluded the general debate and turned to the adoption of the draft decision on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis, noting amendments received from Brazil and Sweden. With no comments or objections in paragraphs 1–7, they were duly adopted. Brazil proposed a new paragraph, which would read, ‘Notes with concern the pronounced geographical imbalance in this evaluation cycle’.
21. The delegation of **Brazil** remarked that this was an observation, and that the amendment was submitted on behalf of other Members of the Committee that expressed their support
22. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted support for Brazil’s proposal from Angola, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam, which was duly adopted. A new paragraph 9 was proposed by Brazil, which would read, ‘Commends the Evaluation Body for using the dialogue in an effective way to strengthen accuracy of its evaluations and encourages the Evaluation Body to keep making the broadest possible use of the dialogue procedure’.
23. The **Vice-Chairperson**noted support for the new paragraph 9 from Angola, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam,
24. The delegation of **Angola**had a small amendmentto add, which would read,‘Encourages the Committee to regulate the use of the dialogue’.
25. The **Vice-Chairperson** remarked on the broad support for paragraph 9 as it stood and that the amendment significantly changed its meaning, not least because it addressed the Committee and not the Evaluation Body. The Vice-Chairperson suggested that a new paragraph be added instead should Angola wish to maintain its proposal.
26. The delegation of **Angola**agreed that it could be a new paragraph.
27. The **Vice-Chairperson**returned to the adoption of paragraph 9, which was duly adopted.
28. The delegation of **Angola**asked for some time.
29. The delegation of **Mauritania** wished to be added to the list of co-sponsors.
30. The **Vice-Chairperson**turned to the next paragraph 10 [originally paragraph 8], which was duly adopted without objections. Paragraphs 11 and 12 were also adopted without objections. Brazil had proposed an amendment to paragraph 13.
31. The delegation of **Brazil** explained that it had made some minor changes to the text to present more positive language.
32. The **Vice-Chairperson**presented theamendmentto paragraph 13, which would read, **‘**Notes the need to further promote more detailed information on the scope of inscription criteria, presentation of the forms and other requirements related to the nomination, and underscores the importance of the 2003 Convention’s capacity-building approach in assisting submitting States Parties with the preparation of nominations in cooperation with its Global Facilitators Network as well as accredited non-governmental organizations’.
33. The delegation of **Czechia** did not object to the proposal by Brazil, but proposed alternative wording to the first part of the sentence, which would read, ‘Notes the need to keep reiterating the nature of the inscription criteria and requirements embedded in the forms as well as all other requirements of the nomination procedure, and underscores […]’.
34. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked Czechia for its proposal, which would substitute the wording proposed by Brazil.
35. The delegation of **Paraguay** supported Brazil’s initial wording without Czechia’s amendment.
36. The delegation of **Panama** did not object to Czechia’s amendment but wished to see it written as whole as the amendments proposed currently read as two separate paragraphs.
37. The **Vice-Chairperson**agreedthat the amendment by Czechia should not appear as a new paragraph 14, noting that Paraguay expressed support for the initial proposal by Brazil.
38. The delegation of **Malaysia** sought further clarification on the proposal by Brazil, noting that the amendment sought to provide more detailed information on the scope of inscription criteria compared to the amendment proposed by Czechia. The delegation felt that there was a difference in meaning in the proposals by Brazil and Czechia on the scope and nature of inscriptions, respectively, asking the Members to elaborate further.
39. The delegation of **Czechia** explained that from its perspective ‘scope’ referred to the boundaries of the criterion and their implication under the criterion, whereas ‘nature’ referred to the characterization of the criterion, that is, what the Committee wished to see and fulfil. The delegation did not wish to cause confusion and could withdraw its amendment.
40. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked Czechia for its flexibility, inviting Brazil to explain.
41. The delegation of **Brazil** explained that the scope of the criteria are the limits of the criteria, whereas the nature referred to the essence of the criteria.
42. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that Paraguay expressed support for the first part, as presented by Brazil. Czechia had presented another proposal but remained flexible.
43. The delegation of **Burkina Faso**felt thatBrazil’s first proposal was easier to understand, whereas Czechia’s proposal appeared more complicated.
44. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** sought the simpler approach, noting that the original paragraph did not mention neither scope nor nature, as it concerned the lack of knowledge of the inscription criteria. Thus, whether the Committee decided to go with Brazil or Czechia’s proposal, ‘scope’ or ‘nature’ could be deleted accordingly.
45. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked Saudi Arabia for its proposal to delete ‘scope’ in Brazil’s amendment or delete ‘nature’ in Czechia’s amendment.
46. The delegation of **Ethiopia** felt that Brazil’s amendment, referring to ‘scope of inscription’, had its own meaning and was relevant in this context, which it supported. The proposal concerning ‘nature’ in fact made it more complicated. Indeed, improving the ‘scope of inscription criteria’ provided clarity, and it therefore wished to maintain Brazil’s amendment.
47. The **Vice-Chairperson**thanked Ethiopia and noted a trend towards the proposal initially formulated by Brazil, turning to Czechia for its consideration.
48. The delegation of **Czechia** withdrew its amendment.
49. The **Vice-Chairperson**thanked Czechia for its flexibility. With no further comments, paragraph 13 as amended by Brazil was duly adopted. She turned to paragraph 13bis, initially proposed by Sweden and supported by Czechia, Germany, Slovakia and Switzerland, which would read, ‘Asks the Secretariat to prepare a proposal to 18.COM for changes to the Operational Directives in order to make it possible for Member States with no previous elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity to request International Assistance for the preparation of their first nomination thereon’. With no comments or objections, paragraph 13bis became paragraph 14 and was duly adopted. Paragraphs 15 and 16 were also adopted without objections.
50. The delegation of **Panama** noted a discrepancy with the paragraphs as they were read out.
51. The **Vice**-**Chairperson** explained that she was summarizing the paragraphs.
52. For the sake of time, the delegation of **Saudi Arabia** proposed to adopt the paragraphs as they appeared, as the Committee had had time to read the paragraphs in advance.
53. The **Vice-Chairperson**noted that there were no objections to paragraphs 17 and 18, which were duly adopted. Turning to the decision as a whole, the **Vice-Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 7**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/7) **adopted**.
54. The **Vice-Chairperson** invited the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body to share his thoughts.
55. The **Chairperson of the** **Evaluation Body[[26]](#footnote-27)** congratulated the States that had inscribed their elements and thanked the Committee for the discussions. As the Chairperson of the Body, he had a duty to reflect on the Committee’s decisions. Speaking on behalf of all the members of the Evaluation Body, he remarked on the characterization of this ‘green’ cycle. Many elements inscribed demonstrated how important intangible cultural heritage is to achieving the sustainable development goals and to preserving biodiversity in the ecosystem. In 2023, the Convention will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. Twenty years is a good age to take stock of accomplishments, but it is also a delicate age, one in which the Committee decides on how the future will look and the path it wishes to take. In recent days, very important choices for the future of the Convention had been made by the Committee, choices that highlight this path. The Evaluation Body is appointed by the Committee to provide professional advice and it respects the decisions made by the Committee. The Body, however, considered it a duty to take the many insights offered by the discussions these past days and to share some practical ideas with the Committee, having taken note of the issues that emerged. The Body believed, in particular, that there are five main issues. First, the issue concerning the use of the dialogue process. As previously stated, the Evaluation Body used the dialogue process only when it felt that a simple, clear and short question could resolve a doubt. It was said during these discussions that there are no criteria in the use of this tool. However, the Body strictly adhered to paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives. The framework of the dialogue process was shared by the States Parties during the information and exchange session organized in March 2019 and in the following two years. According to the results of these exchange sessions, “the Body should limit itself to point out specific questions requiring a simple response.” The Body had used the dialogue process based on this principle from 2019 to the present day. The Body recognized that this approach is not a ‘true’ dialogue. The rules that had been set do not allow for a dialogue *stricto sensu*. The Body cannot engage in an active exchange between the Body, the Member State and the communities. It can only formulate a short question and receive a short answer. This is not a dialogue. If the Committee does not change the dialogue framework, which was provisionally decided in 2019, then the rule will remain as it exists today and the Body cannot, should not, use the dialogue process in a different way. In the course of discussions with reference to very complex files, the Body was asked several times why it did not use the dialogue process. The Body had responded to the question, but the best response was provided when asking the submitting State to take the floor and provide information that was not in their file, in some cases changing several parts of the dossier. The Body could not have done this work without violating its mandate. The Body noted that the majority of Committee Members felt that they need to change the terms of reference.
56. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** hoped that the Committee will clarify the terms of reference to the new Body on how it can implement the dialogue process when it discusses this point under agenda item 14. It is clear, however, that if it were to be decided that the Body should use the dialogue tool at all times and in every case where a file should be referred, the time for evaluation will be significantly lengthened, thereby reducing the number of nominations examined under each cycle. During this session, with the most challenging decisions, the Committee made it clear that the positive assessment was not based on the file submitted by the State during the nomination process, but on the additional information provided by the State Party in the course of the Committee’s work. This is an important decision because, in effect, the State is allowed to change large sections of the file during the Committee’s work. It is the Committee’s decision, which the Body respected and did not challenge in any way. However, there is a practical problem. The new information that the State shares during the Committee session does not appear in the dossier. Only the original dossier (and not the new information) is published on UNESCO’s website and used in tools based on this information. If someone wished to learn more about an element, the first step would be to turn to the UNESCO website. Moreover, published files may serve as a model for new files to be drafted in the future. There was thus a probability that the Committee will deal with the same recurrent issues. To avoid any negative ripple effects on the credibility of the Convention, the Body suggested that the Committee authorize the Secretariat to receive any additional document drafted by the submitting State Party, with the consent of the communities concerned, with the information provided during the Committee session so that it can be published alongside the submitted file on the UNESCO website.
57. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** raised another issue concerning the possibility to acquire external information. He admitted that some of the interventions made by some Committee Members struck the members of the Body personally. Its work was described as cold, bureaucratic, formal and overly technical. In some instances, it was implied that the Body did not recognize the existence of a country’s intangible cultural heritage. It was said that the Body cannot evaluate a piece of paper but the aspiration and emotion of a country. At the same time, some Committee Members replied to the Body’s recommendation by saying that its experts had evaluated the file differently. Yet, the Body’s experts are the Committee’s experts. It was recalled that the Evaluation Body is a direct expression of the Committee. The Body is not ICOMOS, IUCN or an independent agency working for a fee. It was elected by the Committee. Six members are representatives of six Member States of this Convention. Six other members represent non-governmental organizations. There are two members elected from each Electoral Group. Geographical equilibrium is respected. All twelve members are elected by a majority vote of the Committee. The Body comprises the Committee’s experts and works on a voluntary basis to help States submit applications that are more consistent with the objectives of the Convention. This is technical work, but the evaluations must be objective and based on data that only the submitting State can provide. The Body’s members cannot evaluate on personal considerations or personal knowledge. They cannot evaluate based on individual feelings or perceptions, or on the basis of sympathy for a State or on the legitimate aspirations of a State to see its heritage on the List. If these were allowed, everything would be discretionary and devoid of any logic. This very mechanism created by the Committee several years ago is now a model for many other UNESCO Conventions and programmes because the current evaluation process is a model of transparency, inclusiveness, participation, in which every State has an equal chance. *What would happen if a State were to transmit insufficient information or if a dossier contains expressions that are contrary to the spirit of the Convention?* *What should the Body do if – in the file – it is said that the community will be involved in the implementation of safeguarding measures, but the State omits information about the community?* It happened during this cycle. The current dialogue process cannot resolve this complex issue. Perhaps a partial solution could be provided by the Committee that would enable the Evaluation Body to communicate online with the community, as suggested by several States Parties during the debate, to find out directly if, indeed, there has been involvement and in what way and for whom. This would solve many of the issues and confirm a founding principle of the 2003 Convention, as the protagonists in this process are the community.
58. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the third issue in this cycle, which was that some States Parties clearly have greater difficulty in preparing files. It is thus essential to work on the capacity-building actions. Indeed, the Convention is a model, an example to other programmes. It is a Convention rich in expertise, and capacity is available through the trained facilitators as well as non-governmental organizations, UNESCO Chairs and others. They are all available to support communities, groups and individuals, and also States Parties in drafting the dossier. However, it is clear that they are not used enough. The Body hoped that the support mechanisms for States can be expanded. Capacity building and the preparation of nomination files by States Parties should reflect the language of the Committee and the Evaluation Body’s reports of the last ten years. Each year, the report indicates, as several Members of the Committee underlined, the important issues to consider when drafting a nomination file, including which aspects to highlight and which ones to explain. This year, the report is even clearer on these points. Another capacity-building action is to respect the referral option. Referral is a great opportunity for States Parties to review the dossier and re-open the dialogue with the community. The Body regretted that this Committee decided in many cases not to give States Parties the opportunity to better clarify their files. Indeed, it was emphasized how the files returned to the Body’s attention following a referral were often well written. During this cycle, the Body had underlined how three files that had been previously referred had been re-submitted and evaluated very favourably.
59. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** raised the fourth issue on the topic of over-commercialization and exploitation of intangible cultural heritage for tourism purposes. The Evaluation Body is not against commercialization and tourism. It had been clearly stated that these activities can improve the livelihoods of communities if the activities are well managed. These are two very important issues that must take into account what is stated in the Ethical principles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage adopted by this Committee in 2015 at the session in Namibia. The final issue concerns the relationship between the Committee and the Evaluation Body. The Body is technical, but it is also human. The experts study and practice cultural heritage with a lot of passion. Back in their countries, they work with communities and understand the values of intangible cultural heritage and how important these nominations are to them. When the Secretariat asked the Body to urgently evaluate the dossier submitted by Ukraine, no member of the Body objected, even if it meant additional work. The same thing occurred in 2021 when the Body was asked to evaluate the file submitted by Haiti. This year, the cycle was made even more complex with three files submitted by Afghanistan. As mentioned by the Secretariat, the material was initially presented with the names and the letters of consent from the communities omitted from the file so as to protect personal information. The Body only had access to this file during the in-person meeting in Paris in June 2021. This required extraordinary work from the Body, which was accepted by all the members. Even in this case, the Body based its evaluation on the Convention and did not let emotions override the documentation submitted. In this regard, it would probably be better to create a dialogue between the Committee and the Evaluation Body. To this end, it could be very useful to organize an information and exchange session between Members of the Committee and members of the Body before the beginning of the evaluation process, for example, between January and February of each year, so that the conduct of the evaluation can be shared in absolute transparency. To conclude, the Evaluation Body followed the framework that had been set by the Committee, which is intended to be transparent, inclusive and fair to all States Parties. The Body strives to do its best to offer professional advice and recommendations. The Body thanked the Committee for its trust. It was confident that working together over the next twenty years of the Convention will be even more fruitful.
60. The **Vice-Chairperson**warmly thanked the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body for his passionate intervention, full of proposals and ideas, which the Committee may wish to take into consideration. The Vice-Chairperson adjourned the day’s session.

*[Friday, 2 December, morning session]*

**ITEM 16 OF THE AGENDA:**

**DATE AND VENUE OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/16*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-16-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 16*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/16)

1. The **Chairperson** resumed his position and was happy to note that the Committee had concluded its examination of all the nominations to the Representative List, the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance. The Chairperson presented the order of the day’s proceedings, starting with the date and venue of the eighteenth session of the Committee under agenda item 16, followed by agenda item 17, the election of the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the Committee. The Chairperson had been informed that Botswana had some good news to share, welcoming the Minister of Culture of Botswana.
2. The **Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development of Botswana**,H.E. Mr Tumiso Raggare, was delighted to announce a good day for Botswana and a good day for Africa. On behalf of the Government of Botswana, the Minister thanked the Committee for endorsing Botswana to host the eighteenth session of the Committee in 2023. Botswana became a State Party to the 2003 Convention in 2010. Since ratification, a number of initiatives had been carried out to create an enabling environment for the effective implementation of the Convention. These include strengthening implementation of national policy on culture and other related frameworks, the development of implementation structures of intangible cultural heritage at national and local levels, capacity-building on intangible cultural heritage at both national and local levels, and the mobilization of technical and financial resources from UNESCO funding sources, such as the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, the Regular Programme, Flanders Funds-in-Trust and the UNESCO Participation Programme. To date, Botswana has inscribed three elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List: Earthenware pottery-making skills in Botswana’s Kgatleng District; Dikopelo folk music of Bakgatla ba Kgafela in Kgatleng District; and Seperu folkdance and associated practices. It has submitted all its periodic reports on time: the first country report since ratification in 2016; the first and second periodic reports for Earthenware pottery-making skills in 2016 and 2020, respectively; and the first periodic report for Dikopelo folk music of Bakgatla ba Kgafela in 2021. Botswana was grateful to have been elected as a Member of the Committee in 2020, which had given it the opportunity to host the next Committee session. It took note that 2023 will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in Botswana, which it will take on board together with colleagues at the Secretariat. Botswana was very happy to take over from its African brothers and sisters of the Kingdom of Morocco and would also be happy to witness an increase in the number of files from Africa during its tenure as Chairperson. The Minister welcomed the delegates to Botswana in 2023, where they will experience the warm hospitality of its people.

*[Applause of acclamation]*

1. The **Chairperson** thanked the Minister, adding that the Committee was very honoured for his presence and happy that Botswana was taking up the torch; an African country announcing the news on African soil. He congratulated Botswana on its overall actions mentioned in favour of the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and in relation to its commitment to the principles of UNESCO.
2. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 16**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/16) **adopted.**
3. The **Chairperson** warmly thanked Botswana, inviting the Secretary to provide additional information concerning the venue and dates.
4. The **Secretary** reminded the Committee that it was also its task to set the dates. Having consulted and confirmed the dates with the Director-General and the authorities of Botswana, he was pleased to propose that the eighteenth session be held from 4–9 December 2023, and the draft decision was amended accordingly.

**ITEM 17 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/17*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-17-EN.docx)

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

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 17 and the election of the next Bureau of the Committee.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that, in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee shall elect its Bureau, which consists of a Chairperson, one or more Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until the end of the next ordinary session. When electing the Bureau, the Committee, shall have due regard for equitable geographical representation and, to the extent as possible, a balance among the various fields of intangible cultural heritage, in accordance with Rule 13.4. The members of the Bureau also need to be Members of the Committee. It has been the custom of this Committee in the last few years to have all Electoral Groups be represented in its Bureau through the Chairperson and Vice-Chairs. The Rapporteur should not express his/her opinion or vote in their capacity as Rapporteur to respect the principle of equitable geographic representation within the Bureau, pursuant to Rule 12.1 of the Rules of Procedure. His/her role is to validate the decisions taken by the Committee and its Bureau, after preparation by the Secretariat.
3. The **Chairperson** remarked that it was customary that the Chairperson of the Bureau come from the host country and therefore Botswana will be the Bureau Member from Group V(a).
4. The delegation of **Botswana** was happy to announce Mr Mustaq Moorad as Chairperson.
5. The **Chairperson** took note and congratulated H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad from Botswana on his election as Chairperson of the eighteenth session by acclamation *[applause].*
6. The delegation of **Czechia** proposed Ms Eva Kuminková of Czechia to serve as Rapporteur of the next session of the Committee.
7. The **Chairperson** congratulated the new members of the Bureau, noting the proposals for Vice-Chairpersons from Electoral Group I – Switzerland, Electoral Group II – Slovakia, Electoral Group III – Peru, Electoral Group IV – Bangladesh, and Electoral Group V(b) – Morocco. **The Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 17**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/17) **adopted.**

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-8-EN.docx)

**Decisions:** [*17.COM 8.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/8.a)

[*17.COM 8.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/8.b)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 8 and the follow-up of elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention. This item concerned the correspondence received by the Secretariat on elements already inscribed on the Lists of the Convention and presents, in particular, the case of Ducasse of Ath, part of the element ‘Giants and dragons processionals of Belgium and of France’. The Chairperson recalled that this specific case is brought to the present session of the Committee on the basis of Bureau Decision [17.COM 5 BUR 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/17.COM%25205.BUR/5) taken on 4 October. This decision specifically recommended that, “in accordance with paragraph 40.2(e) of the Operational Directives, the removal requests concerning the Ducasse of Ath be included in the provisional agenda of the seventeenth session of the Committee”.
2. The **Secretary** explained that document 8 is divided into two separate parts, each linked to a draft decision: section A (and its related draft decision 8.a) deals with the case of the ‘Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’, and section B (and its related draft decision 8.b) provides an overview of the three cases of correspondence received on other inscribed elements. Section A concerning the ‘Ducasse of Ath’ part of the ‘Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’ is a serious and complex issue. First, it touches on serious issues related to the founding principles of UNESCO, as well as the requirement of mutual respect among communities under Article 2 of the Convention. Second, the case is complicated, as the inscribed element covers nine towns in two countries. This case presented the Committee with the first application of the new provisions related to removal requests, which were established through revisions of the Operational Directives by the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022 (Resolution[9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/9.GA/9)), in particular, related to paragraphs 40.1 to 40.3 of the Operational Directives. The element was originally proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005 and then incorporated into the Representative List as a multinational inscription in 2008, along with all the other proclaimed Masterpieces of the previous programme. The element focuses on traditional processions of large effigies of giants, animals or dragons in nine towns in Belgium and France, including the town of Ath in Belgium, where the ‘Ducasse of Ath’ is held every year. Concerning the removal requests, in August 2019, February 2020, and again in August 2022, several non-governmental organizations and individuals in Belgium sent letters to the Secretariat concerning the Ducasse of Ath and, in particular, one of its characters known as ‘The Savage’. In 2022 alone, twenty-nine communications were received, mostly before the 2022 edition of the Ducasse, all of which expressed serious concerns about this character, which was described as a racist and discriminatory manifestation. Twenty-five of the twenty-nine messages received specifically requested the removal of the Ducasse of Ath from the Representative List.
3. The **Secretary** explained that the Secretariat forwarded the first complaint received in August 2019 to the authorities of Belgium and had several informal meetings to raise these concerns. The Secretariat first brought the matter to the attention of the Committee at its fourteenth session in 2019 under agenda item 14 (Annex II of the working document), and the Committee took note of the correspondence received in a summary form, as reflected in Decision[14.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/14). In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, the 2020 and 2021 editions of the Ducasse were cancelled. The festivity in the town of Ath only resumed in 2022, when the Secretariat received a greater number of letters. The Secretary recalled the main steps followed since the series of communications received in August 2022. As per paragraphs 40.1 and 40.2 of the Operational Directives, the correspondence received was transmitted to the State Party of Belgium on 16 August 2022 (before the edition of the festival in 2022) and then on 28 September 2022 (after the 2022 edition of the festival). In addition, the Secretariat collected information through informal meetings, as well as through online research of media sources and the official website of the Ducasse of Ath itself. In response to the first batch of communications transmitted by the Secretariat, Belgium responded with a letter on 14 September 2022 firmly condemning racism in all its forms (Annex II of the working document). The letter describes the actions taken by the French-speaking community of Belgium, the municipal authorities of Ath and the community itself. These included a consultation process initiated in 2019, whose results were reflected in the press release issued by the official website of the Ducasse of Ath on 24 August 2022. For the 2022 edition of the festivity, the town of Ath decided, nevertheless, to maintain the character of ‘The Savage’, although a small change to the character was enacted and a few attributes were removed during the procession.
4. The **Secretary** further explained that the Secretariat brought the matter to the Bureau of the Committee at its fifth meeting on 4 October 2022, when the Bureau decided that the case warrants the attention of the Committee given the seriousness of the issues raised. The decision of the Bureau was to bring the removal requests to the attention of the present session. The new provisions foresee two procedures for the removal of an element: one for cases presented by the concerned State Party and the other for when the request comes from any other party. As this case falls under the second category, the Committee at its present session was presented with two options, described in paragraph 40.2(e) (ii) of the Operational Directives: (a) to either keep the element on the List; or (b) to place it under enhanced follow-up status. In light of these considerations, the Committee may wish to make use of the newly adopted provisions for an enhanced follow up in order to obtain additional information before deciding on whether the Ducasse of Ath should be maintained on the Representative List or not. If the Committee should decide to place the element on enhanced follow-up, it was proposed that the matter be brought back to the Committee at its next session for decision to either retain or remove the Ducasse of Ath from the List. The Committee may also decide, under the new provisions, for one more round of enhanced follow up.
5. The **Secretary** presented section B of this item concerning other correspondence received by the Secretariat during the reporting period, as the Secretariat is requested to bring information received from third parties on already-inscribed elements and nominations to the attention of the Committee, and to do so in the form of a summary to be included in a working document (Decisions [13.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/9), [14.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/14) and [16.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/D%25C3%25A9cisions/16.COM/11)). The first case concerns the element inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List ‘Suiti cultural space’ from Latvia. The issue raised was reported to the sixteenth session of the Committee and since then a response was received from the State Party of Latvia. The second and third cases both concern correspondences received from individuals expressing a personal preoccupation about an element that involves, in one case, alcohol having been inscribed on the Representative List or in another case, challenging the technical descriptions of an inscribed element. The Secretariat is of the opinion that these cases do raise questions as to how or whether or not to treat cases from an individual expressing a personal opinion without there being any institutional affiliation. In the meantime, the Committee may wish to request that the Secretariat continue to bring information from third parties concerning the status of inscribed elements to its attention. This may take again the form of a summary to be included in a working document regarding the follow-up of inscribed elements.
6. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for the important detailed presentation.
7. The delegation of **Germany** thanked the Secretariat for the thorough and relevant explanations, adding that the figure of the ‘Savage’ in the Ducasse of Ath is untenable and unacceptable and to be condemned, which all can agree. The Secretariat had shown that there had already been dialogue with the authorities and the non-governmental organizations on the ground. *How can we tackle this real moral problem?* which is not just a problem of the Convention. *Do UNESCO and the Committee distance itself from this celebration and this figure that it condemns?* *Or does the Committee want things to change?* The German philosopher, political scientist and sociologist, Max Weber, talks about an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of conviction. The delegation believed that there must be a way to discard this racist figure of the Ducasse d’Ath. With the enhanced follow-up mechanism recently created, there was the possibility of sending specialists to discuss with the authorities and the non-governmental organizations, once again, one last time, to explain that there is an imminent risk that the Ducasse d’Ath will be removed from the Representative List. Although it was tempting to remove this element from the Representative List, which obviously the Committee would wish to do, there was a risk that nothing will change. A part of this inscribed element will have been removed but the other giants and dragons will remain on the Representative List, excluding the city of the Ducasse d’Ath. *Could the Committee be satisfied with such a result?* The delegation was not. Indeed, the Committee must take advantage of the possibilities offered by the enhanced follow-up mechanism, and then return to the case when it will have the means to remove it from the List.
8. The **Chairperson** thanked Germany for the heartfelt remarks, which pertinently outlined the issues related to the problem faced. All the elements of the debate had been laid down and it was up to the Committee to find the best option. On the issue of principles, this character is intolerable and unacceptable, but there was also the issue of procedure.
9. The delegation of **Botswana** took the floor as a member of the Bureau representing Africa. It entirely agreed with the sentiments expressed by Germany, concurring with the fact that the Committee now has a provision in the Operational Directives that provides for the enhanced follow-up of elements that contravene the Convention. However, in this day and age, with Black Lives Matter and countries destroying statues that depict colonialism and racism, it was contrary to the respect and dignity of human beings that UNESCO, the Convention and living humanity would encourage something like this figure. *What message are we sending to the world?* especially when colleagues from UNESCO were meeting in Mexico at the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination.[[27]](#footnote-28) The Committee must be on the same page or sing from the same hymn, as they say. Botswana sponsored the amendment because it was felt that the global reflection did not take into account issues of racism and discrimination, a provision that should be addressed today. The delegation believed that this part of the element – and it was not against the eight other communities – should be removed immediately. The communities had been given a chance. The Committee Members have seen the pictures and read the interviews of the mayor of the city, who says that they are not going to remove the figure because it is part of their culture. The Committee is at a crossroads and should seriously reflect on what it has approved in terms of Operational Directives. *Did the directives take into account the issues of racism and discrimination when it improved the enhanced follow-up mechanism?* The Committee owed it to Africa, to Morocco. It should leave this seventeenth session with a good memory in peace and harmony. The delegation believed this issue deserved the attention of the Committee and action. For these reasons, it supported option 2 to delist the element with immediate effect.
10. The **Chairperson** fully subscribed to the Botswana’s remarks. Everyone agreed that the image is unbearable, irrespective of their origin or continent. As universalists, we are imbued with universal values that bring us together under UNESCO. It is not the entire element that poses the problem, it is this particular character of the ‘savage’ that is unacceptable. The Committee stood on African soil, and it was right to point this out that it cannot be accepted by UNESCO. As an African, the Chairperson was deeply shocked by this element.
11. The delegation of **Czechia** remarked that the material prepared by the Secretariat quite clearly explained what has happened and which steps had been taken by Belgium to reconcile the situation. It believed that Belgium had taken the situation seriously and had decided to consult the community for its opinion and to find a solution that would be widely accepted and based on agreement. However, the Committee is discussing the very founding principles of UNESCO and the Convention. The community may decide to retain the character of ‘The Savage’. In which case, it would seem to step away from UNESCO’s principles, or it might give up the character in order to remain on the List. The Committee may consider that if this done, *is it actually going to change the element and interfere with the natural development of intangible cultural heritage?* The issue therefore raises many questions. *Does the character reflect some concrete part of history that happened and cannot be denied even though we wish to erase it?* *Or is history distorted through this character?* *Is it a stereotypical racist image or does it reflect some historic approach that everyone consciously wants to defeat?* The delegation understood that it is an extremely sensitive issue, and it wondered what effect it would bring to immediately remove the Ducasse of Ath from the List compared to allowing for a follow-up process. If the Committee decides on the latter, it will allow the communities to thoroughly reflect on the situation and their approach towards respecting other groups. This may lead to a bottom-up solution that is accepted by the wider public and thus achieve long-term change. The case would be made more visible with the hoped-for result leading to a profound change of course. It may serve as a good example of the power of the Convention and the capacity of intangible cultural heritage to overcome prejudice and discrimination, and to promote respect among nations. The delegation believed that the community should be given more time to find a solution themselves and to achieve a real, effective well-considered and, more importantly, long-lasting change that will have a societal effect.
12. The delegation of **Slovakia** strongly condemned any form of discrimination and racism as represented in this case by the figure of the ‘Savage’ This directly contradicts the founding principles of UNESCO and the international rules-based order. It believed that the 2003 Convention and the Committee – through its authority – may help to guide the reflection process within the communities to align with the principles of the Convention. Looking to the future, intangible cultural heritage is not a static element, it evolves with time, reflecting the development of society, and UNESCO can play an active and positive role in this respect. It took note from the recently submitted periodic report of the State Party that the reflection process on the festivity of the Ducasse of Ath had already begun. At the same time, in July 2022, during the General Assembly, the State Party adopted the procedure to accompany this process to encourage the communities to resolve the serious issues raised. It asked that Belgium elaborate on these measures and how the reflection process based on dialogue with the communities will occur.
13. The delegation of **Belgium** was fully aware of the seriousness of the allegations raised with regard to the character, reiterating its commitment to promoting respect and mutual understanding between communities. These are the values that allow heritage to weave links between our cultures. Belgium strongly condemned all forms of racism and discrimination and was firmly convinced that only an approach favouring education, awareness and development would allow to move forward in a sustainable manner, including on changing mindsets. This is why the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium had, since 2019, created a space for reflection and dialogue at the local level in order to respond to the concerns raised. This process mobilizes the community concerned as a whole, involving heritage bearers, local authorities, associations and citizens. Many initiatives had emerged to respond to the concerns raised and, thanks to the creativity of stakeholders, activities involving heritage education had been developed, guided by the principles of inclusiveness and living together. This work is in progress. The delegation welcomes the in-depth follow-up draft decision as presented by the Secretariat. It only required a few months to complete. By postponing its decision until 2023, the Committee will allow the community of Ath to continue its development work and present an example of openness promoted by the Convention. The Committee has the choice to encourage the community of Ath to continue its efforts. This would constitute a sort of pilot project, a unique opportunity to illustrate how intangible heritage can contribute to UNESCO’s mission to raise the barriers to peace in the minds of men and women. The community of Ath wants to be this pilot project, as evidenced by the work in progress. As mentioned by other members of the Committee, this path would also be consistent with the spirit of the decision taken by all the States Parties during the General Assembly in July 2022, concluding this in-depth work of two years. This decision was intended to offer a framework and direction to a case such as this, while showing the willingness of States Parties to promote reflection and pedagogy to encourage such elements to fully realign themselves with the principles of UNESCO. *What scenario did the Committee envisage in these rules if it were not for a case like this?*
14. The **Chairperson** thanked Belgium for its response, clarifying that Belgium was not targeted and that it was only the small community that depicted this character. Having served eight years in Belgium as Ambassador, he testified to the openness and tolerance of the country, where there is no discrimination and where they respect these principles. The Belgian authorities, including the president of the Walloon region, were fully aware of the problem and were working on a solution. The Chairperson spoke of the importance of this debate and of the efforts of the Committee to find a consensual way out, knowing that everyone in this room clearly and openly condemned discrimination or racism. It is this character that poses a problem.
15. The delegation of **Angola** regretted that it was confronted with this situation of racism and discrimination within the Representative List, which risked discrediting the Convention. This item does not correspond to the moments of joy and cultural exaltation experienced in recent days. The Processional giants and dragons of Belgium and France was inscribed in 2008 in the spirit of promoting and safeguarding the festive and centuries-old practices of the communities concerned in both countries. To allow the Ducasse of Ath festival in Belgium and its deplorable and reprehensible character the ‘Savage’ to continue being part of the Representative List would tarnish the element and call into question the other communities concerned in both countries, which do not want to be associated with this racist and discriminatory character. Culture is one of the most beautiful and important expressions of a people and community. It is not static but dynamic and can promote an inclusive culture free from stereotypes and prejudices. Discrimination in its various forms cannot be allowed to corrupt our societies to the point of going unnoticed because it has become normalized. The delegation found it hard to believe that a Member State of UNESCO and of this Convention, a country promoting African nominations to the list of intangible cultural heritage, can allow the perpetuation of a clearly racist and discriminatory character within this community, especially after the many complaints filed over the past few years, reminding us of the time of slavery. Actions that are against mutual respect and the founding principles of UNESCO cannot and should not be associated with the Organization, and even less with safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Angola therefore favoured the immediate removal of the Ducasse of Ath from the element ‘Processional giants and dragons of Belgium and France’ inscribed on the Representative List to defend the values and dignity of Africans. It was the responsibility of the Member States of the Convention to promote its good practices and to recall its responsibilities towards future generations to whom we leave these cultural values.
16. The delegation of **Rwanda**thanked the Secretariat for presenting its detailed report and for having followed this issue very closely since 2019, taking into account the directives put in place to guarantee the respect and dignity of all. The element no longer fulfils and never truly fulfilled the criteria for inscription. Indeed, the Secretariat’s report noted that the character of the ‘Savage’ was not mentioned in any part of the State Party’s nomination file. The delegation held the firm conviction that part of the file would never have been inscribed by the Committee if this information had been known, as it does not comply with Article 2 of the Convention. This omission, whether voluntary or involuntary, constitutes a serious affront to the institution. The delegation took note of the concerns raised by civil society in the State Party concerned. It also took note of the efforts made by Belgian authorities in response to the complaints received. However, it deeply regretted that following the transmission to Belgium of the correspondence received prior to the celebration of the 2022 edition of the procession, the efforts made in relation to the role of the character of the ‘Savage’ was only to allow the latter, “to get rid of his chains and his nose ring for good”. The delegation also noted that the survey carried out by the city of Ath concerning the character of the ‘Savage’ of the Ducasse of Ath is not representative of the population of the State Party. It was also noted that when the municipality of Ath was asked to reflect and propose changes, in an interview with Belgian television the mayor of Ath, Mr Bruno Lefebvre, replied that it was out of the question to get rid of the character of the ‘Savage’.
17. The delegation of **Rwanda**explained that,at a time when the Committee should devote itself to a mature reflection on the role of the Convention, in the evolution of practices, the Representative List should not be transformed into a coercive instrument towards bearers. The Committee’s role is not to arbitrate customs and habits, but it has a responsibility not to honour these customs when they praise discrimination and racism, and objectifies the other, denying their dignity and humanity. It has a responsibility not to teach this community but to protect the rest of humanity by sparing them from suffering the presence of this element on the Representative List. Its role is not to police the communities but to watch over the nature of the Representative List and to ensure that it does not accommodate the unacceptable. Every manifestation of this practice under the auspices of UNESCO is one edition too many. It is not up to the Belgian authorities to remove the chains of a ‘savage’ so that the racist connotation is diluted. It is up to UNESCO to distance itself from this message, which is incompatible with the values promoted by UNESCO. Being black is not a travesty, it is not a disguise. Being black is even less of a disguise when it is supposed to scare children and adults alike. This character, considered ‘folkloric’ by some, refers to a dark history of humanity, and the delegation was dismayed to note that this issue is still the subject of a debate in 2022 within this institution and within the Committee, the guarantor of this Convention. It is for all these reasons, and since the ‘Savage’ has never been either a giant or a dragon or a folkloric person but a man, that Rwanda proposed the immediate removal of the Ducasse of Ath from the element ‘Processional giants and dragons of Belgium and France’ and therefore from the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
18. The **Chairperson**fully subscribed to the powerful, relevant and eloquent remarks made by Rwanda, which touched everyone in this room.
19. The delegation of **Burkina Faso**congratulated the Secretariat on its report, noting that complaints that were made in 2019, 2021 and 2022 and transmitted to the authorities of the State concerned did not prevent the presence of the controversial figure in the 2022 procession. Two sessions of the Committee had already taken note of this case in 2019 and 2021. Indeed, one session of the Committee in 2019 dealt with a similar case concerning the Carnival of Aalst in its Decision [14.COM 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/12), and the same State Party had assumed its responsibilities by requesting the removal of the element. The communities of the city concerned are divided on the withdrawal of the procession of a ‘savage’ or blackface character despite the efforts undertaken by the State concerned. The delegation urged the Committee to help part of the community of the city of Ath with a fair and courageous decision in harmony with the fundamental principles of UNESCO. It seemed that the case no longer required enhanced follow-up. It is the Convention that the Committee seeks to strengthen, and inscription of the element must contribute to fostering dialogue and must embody mutual respect between communities. Indeed, the character is controversial and opposes communities, some of whom have asked for its withdrawal. The Committee must break the chains of slavery, the enslavement of humans by others, as well as the chains of intolerance. It must rid part of the community of Ath from racist and discriminatory acts. The Ducasse of Ath no longer met the criteria to be part of the Representative List. The Committee should in principle have full powers to take on its responsibilities. The delegation recalled the importance of communities in the implementation of the Convention, especially for good causes. While condemning all racist and discriminatory behaviour, the delegation strongly supported the draft amendment proposed by Botswana and recommended the removal of the Ducasse of Ath in the name of the fundamental principles of humanity and peace of UNESCO. The delegation asked Belgium *why this serious case did not receive the same treatment that was reserved for the carnival of Aalst?*
20. The **Chairperson**invitedBelgium to respond to the question.
21. The delegation of **Belgium** explained that in 2019, the Committee had decided to withdraw the Aalst Carnival. The community then requested the withdrawal, just prior to the Committee session. This case presented a completely different context and work. In this case, the authorities had been working with the community in an in-depth reflection and a work in progress with schools, young people and citizens. The Convention, with its 180 States Parties, had set up a mechanism since July 2022, and the Committee was now entering into this mechanism. This situation was therefore different and the opposite of what happened in 2019, with a strong commitment from the community and authorities to move forward. Belgium was well aware of the importance of the issue. The debate in Belgium mobilizes the whole of society. It was in the process of changing its law on intangible heritage to include ethical principles that are aligned with UNESCO’s. It was active on a national level against racism and discrimination, with a strong debate currently underway in Belgium. The conditions and the context, as well as the new mechanism in place, were therefore different.
22. The delegation of **Paraguay** remarked on the moral and ethical dilemma. The question was how it was even inscribed on the Representative List in the first place, an element that includes such an atrocity. It is an example of how – despite all of its efforts and expertise – the Committee can still inscribe such an abomination on the Representative List, which is an embarrassment to all. From the outset, Paraguay had called on the authorities to undertake their responsibilities in applying the Convention. Racism is a stain in the face of humankind, which should not be allowed to remain. The fact that this element has been inscribed for fourteen years and has benefitted from UNESCO’s approval was intolerable. Paraguay supported its immediate removal from the Representative List.
23. The **Chairperson** invited the Assistant Director-General to shed some light on the process of examination of this file so as not to point the finger at the Evaluation Body.
24. The **Assistant Director-General**, Mr Ernesto Ottone, wished to clarify the history of this element, recalling that this element was actually inscribed based on the previous iteration of this Convention, the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. At the time, the other eighty elements inscribed as Masterpieces were integrated into the Representative List, which used different criteria, as it was a programme, not a Convention. When a programme (not related specifically to this case) does not have a codified convention to guide it, this kind of oversight can occur. The inscription of the element therefore had nothing to do with the Evaluation Body, which did not exist at the time. However, it was perfectly correct to say that this element has been on the Representative List for fifteen years. Everybody in the room agreed that this element runs counter to the very spirit and mandate of UNESCO. Nevertheless, there were discussions underway that were useful not only for this Committee but also for UNESCO. Indeed, Botswana had mentioned the conference on antiracism that took place in Mexico [in November 2022]. Within the confines of its mandate, UNESCO also has a duty to try to shift or change that which is divisive, with the aim of building peace in the minds of men and women. It was important to bear in mind that this is a substantive issue. It is clear that the Committee does not wish to be confronted with similar issues today or in the future, not least because it is the States Parties that submit the elements for inscription on behalf of their communities. As the Evaluation Body mentioned in its report and in its reflections concerning the proceedings of this session, the Body evaluates documents. In the accompanying documents, the submitting State made no mention of the character, even though it is clearly racist. The Evaluation Body cannot therefore evaluate something that is not included in the documentation. What was required was a basis on which this issue can be discussed in the future. The Committee wants the Evaluation Body to do its work thoroughly, for which it needs the full context and background. As correctly mentioned by Rwanda, the Evaluation Body had an overview of the inscription of the original programme, but there was no mention of any divisive racist figure by any of the nine communities, which would have been judged to be out of line with UNESCO’s values and principles. ADG/CLT recalled that a mechanism or process to monitor and follow up on elements was developed in July 2022, which the Committee Members should bear in mind when adopting its decision, as it was not only sending a message but also creating a precedent on how such issues will be treated in the future. What the Committee must avoid is to have a repeat of such discussions in this forum. It therefore needed a clear decision to help guide it in dealing with such issues in the future. The Evaluation Body and the Secretariat will be working hard to make sure that any element submitted by a State never runs counter to the principles and spirit of UNESCO, which will be immediately identified.
25. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his clarifications and elements of assessment which were submitted to the Committee Members so that they could take the most appropriate decision in relation to this matter.
26. The delegation of **Ethiopia** appreciated the Secretariat’s follow up and the Assistant Director-General’s informative explanation. Indeed, every nomination and element are evaluated based on the file presented. However, the Committee must deal with the present situation regardless of what has happened in the past. The delegation joined others in their comments. Ethiopia strongly condemned the ‘Savage’ in the strongest language possible, adding that any reference to ethnicity, be it black, white, red or yellow, was completely inappropriate. The Ducasse of Ath procession and the parody of the ‘Savage’ was not only an insult to Africa but an insult to all Black people around the world and to humanity as a whole. There were three important issues. First, despite the explanation provided by the State Party, no action has been taken since 2019 to stop the procession despite the Secretariat having been informed. COVID-19 should not be an excuse, and although the 2020 and 2021 editions did not take place, it should have been possible to work and dialogue with the community, but the State Party did not respond to the Secretariat. The letter in Annex II of the draft decision came from the community, not from the State Party. The Committee must therefore take note that the State Party is not willing to take immediate action, and the de-listing of the Ducasse of Ath is long overdue. Second, there seemed to be an insistence from the community to continue with this practice, as mentioned in its letter in Annex II, which can be summarized in three points: (a) that Belgium is a champion in adopting legislation against racism, which cannot be an explanation to the issue; (b) that Belgium wished to tackle the issue with policy, but this cannot wait until Belgium comes up with a policy of non-discrimination; and (c) that the letter from the French community of Belgium and the Walloon region clearly states that the legal framework for intangible cultural heritage will soon be the subject of a major reform of various aspects concerning mutual respect between communities. This work will begin at the end of 2022 in view of adoption by parliament in 2023. However, the Committee cannot wait until parliament decides. The decision must come from the Committee, as it was the Committee that inscribed the element as intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, Ethiopia found the working process unacceptable. Since 2019, no action had been taken, while Czechia’s proposal to re-enter the process only allows and tolerates this racism. Ethiopia condemned the Ducasse of Ath and sought its complete removal from the element. The integrity of this Committee in delivering and carrying out its mandate will be judged on this critical issue.
27. The delegation of **Switzerland** took attentive note of the convincing interventions, full of eloquence and heart on the issue, namely, the character of the ‘Savage’ of the Ducasse of Ath. The delegation also found it totally unacceptable and intolerable that such a character is part of an element inscribed on the Representative List. The Assistant Director-General explained how this happened and why, which deserved further reflection. Indeed, as the Evaluation Body bases its decision solely on the nomination file, this situation could happen again, so *what conclusion can be drawn from this in terms of external sources?* This discussion must take place, because the Committee did not want this situation to happen again. The delegation was fully convinced by the points raised, starting with those of Botswana, and that the Committee must send a strong signal that this is unacceptable. The Committee cannot have such a character, with his revolting attributes, included in the Representative List. The Committee must condemn this character and remove it from the Representative List. However, this is not enough. The Committee would send a strong signal that this is unacceptable, but *what will this change in reality?* The fear is that if the Committee decides to remove this character with immediate effect from the element, the Ducasse of Ath will likely continue with this horrible character of the ‘Savage’. The Committee has the opportunity to do more and to have a real impact. Indeed, it had a moral responsibility to do so. The delegation suggested imposing a clear deadline for its withdrawal from the Ducasse of Ath’s next event in August 2023, that is, to remove the Ducasse of Ath from the List if the character of the ‘Savage’ continues to be paraded. This will provide an opportunity to have a real impact so that children are no longer imbued by this vile character who reminds us of all of the dark pages of humanity’s history. The delegation supported Botswana’s first amendment with a slight amendment to Botswana’s second amendment.
28. The **Chairperson**thanked the delegation of Switzerland for its strong, heartfelt words, fully agreeing that this issue was horrible and disturbing, and should be condemned as firmly as possible. Belgium is not targeted, it is this character in particular that is targeted. Indeed, it was not normal that the Committee still had to discuss the removal of this character from the List. The Committee should perhaps create a mechanism that automatically removes such elements without the need for any discussion, not least because everyone agreed that this character had no place in this element.
29. The delegation of **Peru** reaffirmed its firmest condemnation of any racist or discriminatory expressions. It commended the efforts by Belgium and all States Parties that were trying to combat discrimination in all its forms. The delegation fully understood the specificity of the process of inclusion of this element on the List, as explained by the Assistant Director-General. It was therefore necessary to know exactly the kind of procedure that would be needed to resolve this problem without having to remove the element as a whole. This also refers to other cities with similar characteristics. *How should the Committee deal with this case?* States Parties need to take into account the channels for public policies in all our countries. The delegation asked the Secretariat how best to resolve this issue without excluding the entire element as inscribed on the Representative List.
30. The **Chairperson** thanked Peru. Indeed, the problem has been posed and he would invite the Legal Adviser to explain the legal procedure to be followed in relation to this issue after the interventions.
31. The delegation of **Brazil** added its voice to condemn all forms of racism, discrimination and colonialism in the strongest possible terms. Unfortunately, the complaints about the character the ‘Savage’ were not isolated, as a number of recent manifestations had been criticized for displaying symbols in public spaces that can be considered as stereotypes of specific groups. The presence of the ‘Savage’ in the Ducasse of Ath manifestation evokes painful historical memories of enslavement of African and African American populations throughout the modern period. The practice of physical and symbolic violence that permeated these experiences had deeply marked the colonial relations established between Europe, Africa and America. Brazil considered it urgent for the future for the Convention to discuss effective participation of civil society and measures to combat cultural practices associated with racism. For these reasons, Brazil believed that heritage education should always be integrated into safeguarding plans, as they are crucial to promoting the emergence of narratives that especially represent populations that have been silenced over time. Brazil acknowledged the seriousness with which the Secretariat and the Belgian authorities were addressing this issue. It was convinced that the Belgian Government is undertaking all the possible measures to eliminate racists manifestations. UNESCO, Belgium and the Committee should not fear the possible de-listing of the element. It will be a clear sign that we have learned an important lesson, as taught by [political activist] Angela Davis, that it is never enough to be a non-racist. We must be anti-racist.
32. The **Chairperson**concurred with the remarks byBrazil. Unfortunately, in 2022, and for some time, the world has witnessed a rise in racist and discriminatory behaviour. As suggested by Switzerland, on African soil, the Committee should send a very strong message from Rabat to those who reject others in discrimination, racism and the denial of universal values.
33. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** condemned any manifestation of racism with the strongest language. This character that is part of the file, part of intangible cultural heritage, is undeniably racist. Looking at the year 2022 and the ongoing procession, it still manifests racism. Consequently, this is not intangible heritage, neither in terms of the criteria nor the Convention, and there is no principle of human rights and respect that would maintain such a character. The delegation took note of Botswana’s amendments and suggested displaying the draft decision on the screen to facilitate discussion, as everyone was in agreement.
34. The **Chairperson** noted Saudi Arabia’s proposal to display the amendment, agreeing that it would be interesting to present the draft amendment as presented by Botswana.
35. The delegation of **Sweden** spoke as a strong supporter and believer in the spirit of UNESCO, and strongly condemned racism and discrimination in all its forms, including the racist and discriminatory character displayed in this festival. It supported the wise and heartfelt statements made by the Committee Members. It echoed the technical question raised by Peru and awaited the answer from the Legal Adviser.
36. The delegation of **Bangladesh** strongly condemned racism and discrimination in all its forms and manifestations. It had listened to the Committee Members and also took note of the views expressed by Belgium. The Committee was appreciative of the continued contribution of Belgium towards enriching common values as practised through multilateralism. The delegation also thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretary for their clarifications. Botswana remarked that we are neither at an age of colonialism or talking about a State Party that suffers from tyranny of autocracy. The Committee is discussing an element that concerns a community that was warned and given time to rectify its practices, a community that is undermining the greater community to whom the Committee had pledged to safeguard its culture. The reluctance and failure of the community to respect the purpose of this Convention requires that this community be sent a strong message, while upholding the sanctity of the Representative List. The Committee has this responsibility. *Does it qualify as intangible cultural heritage where sharing respect with humanity is the ultimate objective?* The delegation fully concurred with Rwanda in that, had the ‘Savage’ been mentioned in the nomination file, the element would never have been inscribed by the Committee. The dark episodes of history cannot be changed, but the community’s continued celebration undermined this experience of learning from history. However, the Committee can create a new history by removing this element from the Representative List with immediate effect.
37. The delegation of **India** stood in strong solidarity with Africa and the principles of ant-racism and the principles of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,* meaning the world is one family. The delegation declared to those watching this broadcast throughout the world, young men and women and children, the next generation, that black is not savage. To be black is to be beautiful. To be black is to be brilliant and magnificent. When the first man on Earth lifted his head and looked up into the night sky, it was black. The colour of the universe is black and therefore the divinity in India of Krishna is depicted as black. We are proud to be black. We are not ashamed of it because we are beautiful! Any depiction of a black man as a savage shackled in chains and taken on to a ship cannot find a place anywhere in any Convention of any country in the twenty-first century. It is time that this particular element is uprooted and thrown away in the garbage bin of history! We cannot have a second discussion on this. UNESCO stands for the United Nations. The ‘U’ of UNESCO means united. Irrespective of class, caste, creed, race or religion, we are united under one planet. We are united under one ideal. We are united under one principle, and that principle has to be that racism of all sorts, thoughts and forms must be removed, erased, eradicated from thoughts, words, actions, or even our cultural representations. For fifteen years, such a despicable, disgusting representation has been allowed to exist in the form of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This is not humanity. This is despicable. No form of explanation can be given for the fact that a particular political office bearer of a particular small area refuses to remove it. The voice is ours, this is our Representative List. States Parties are signatories to the Convention. The delegation was happy to note agreement across nations and geographical boundaries, whether from Switzerland, Germany, Botswana or Saudi Arabia. The world had come today and rejected the element. It commended UNESCO’s family and hoped that an historical decision would emerge from the ground of Morocco. Morocco is Africa and it was wonderful that it was on the African continent that this historical decision was taken. The delegation commended the Assistant Director-General for the explanation of how this despicable element even existed.
38. Following a two-minute pause in a moment of emotion, the **Chairperson** invitedMalaysia to take the floor.
39. The delegation of **Malaysia** is a firm believer that culture and traditions are something to be preserved, cherished and respected for lasting peace and harmony. Malaysia condemned any form of racism and discrimination, which was totally unacceptable. Practices that are deemed as promoting values that contradict the values of UNESCO must not be perpetuated and condoned. The delegation was united with its brothers and sisters in Africa. In addition, the proposed timeline for the enhanced follow-up would neither reflect nor guarantee any changes to the celebration in Ath in August 2023.
40. The delegation of **Panama** remarked that for years the Committee had voiced its concerns of this unacceptable, despicable depiction, and the communities have heard its message. Discussions are important and the communities need to continue having such discussions. The community of Ath, however, had not yet taken into consideration the Committee’s repeated requests to make changes. For Panama, as for other speakers, one more year is not an option. Neither was it an option to send a mission of experts, because there is no negotiating. They cannot negotiate on behalf of each and every Member State. That is why Panama supported the immediate removal of the element from the Representative List.
41. The delegation of **Morocco** was proud to be African, reflected in the emotion shown by the Chairperson, a feeling that is shared by all Moroccans who are attached to their identity and their African roots. The case of this element inscribed on Representative List, in particular, the so-called ‘savage’ character of the Ducasse of Ath in Belgium, had raised serious concerns and is unacceptable, deplorable and reprehensible. It is a case of racism and discrimination, disrespect between communities and a violation of the fundamental principles of UNESCO and the Convention. The delegation regretted having to debate this issue when in reality it was in no way a subject of dispute, as the Members of the Committee all agreed on the universal values that they share, irrespective of country or origin. The Committee had the duty and responsibility to respect the very principles of the Committee and the Organization. It did not wish to be divided on such a serious matter. The delegation supported Botswana’s amendment and welcomed the heartfelt interventions from African colleagues and other delegations, while welcoming the efforts undertaken by Belgium in this regard. It supported an immediate consensual resolution through the removal of the element.
42. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** was unable to add further to the heartfelt speech by India and many others. Uzbekistan also condemned the existence of any character promoting racism and discrimination in any element of the Representative List. It is an absolutely unacceptable and intolerable practice. Having listened to the many Members and the additional clarifications by Belgium, it supported the measures taken by the Belgian Government in having tried to address the issue. The delegation also greatly appreciated the Secretariat for having started the work with the State Party to address this contradiction. But the Committee should take action now. De-listing will send a very strong message to others that the Committee will not tolerate such unacceptable practices, which undermine the ideals of UNESCO and the Convention. It endorsed this strong message to the world, standing hand-in-hand with the Members who supported the amendment by Botswana.
43. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** strongly condemned this practice of the element. At the same time, it noted that the Committee wondered what to do after its condemnation. The delegation proposed to illustrate the problem as follows. A class of students are really admired on the outside by everyone because the class is ideal. However, a student, who had not met the conditions for enrolment in the establishment, perhaps not meeting the conditions relating to age, was still admitted. It turns out that this student, at some point, is very undisciplined. *What should one do?* *Is it necessary to pretext that because he did not fulfil the conditions of admission one must therefore be indulgent?* The delegation proposed that the Committee act immediately to allow the whole world to understand that, within this Convention, there no tolerance for this kind of practice. At the same time, to return to the metaphor, for the duration of the dismissal of the student, the parents are given the time to take all the measures to help the student to behave better and to reintegrate the class. *If measures are taken today for the removal of the Ducasse of Ath, would it be allowed to rejoin this multinational nomination following the removal of the ‘savage’ persona?* If it is possible, then the Committee must act now.
44. The **Chairperson** thanked theCôte d’Ivoire for the clear message, inviting the Legal Adviser to explain how to proceed in this case, which arose for the first time in this Committee.
45. The **Legal Adviser** recalled the procedure foreseen under the Operational Directives on the removal of an element from the Representative List, which had been approved by the General Assembly at its sixteenth session upon proposal by the Committee. He recalled that, prior to that moment, no such procedures on removal were stipulated in the Operational Directives. Based on the Operational Directives, the Committee is empowered to remove an element from the Representative List under paragraph 40.1, which stipulates that an element shall be removed from the Representative List by the Committee when it determines that it no longer satisfies the required criteria, paying particular attention to criteria R.1 and R.4. The removal can be requested by the concerned State Party, communities, groups or, where appropriate, individuals or other third party. Such a request shall be treated following two different procedures, depending on whether the removal has been requested by the State Party concerned or by third parties, which is the present case. Paragraph 40.1 of the Operational Directives does not specifically refer to the removal of *one* part of an element but only of the element *per se*. In this case, the request for removal received by the Secretariat does not relate to the entire element, namely, Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’, but only to the Ducasse of Ath. However, insofar as this request for removal of one part of the element could potentially have an impact on the entire element, which is an assessment that does not fall within the purview of the Secretariat, the Secretariat has judicially proposed to the Committee to apply the procedure foreseen for the removal of an element, notably, when such a request is made by third parties. In accordance with the procedure, the Bureau had recommended to include this case on the agenda of the current session of the Committee.
46. The **Legal Adviser** explained that at this juncture, based on paragraph 40.3 of the Operational Directives, the Committee may decide to maintain the element on the List, if it considers that the information is complete and there are insufficient grounds for removal, or to place the element under enhanced follow-up status as an interim measure, if it considers that additional information is needed. In the enhanced follow-up process, pursuant to paragraph 40.3 of the Operational Directives, the Evaluation Body would evaluate the element placed on enhanced follow-up status, paying particular attention to Article 2 of the Convention and, on the basis of additional information gathered through exchange and dialogue, shall transmit its report and recommendations to the Secretariat. On the basis of the recommendation of the Evaluation Body, the Committee may then decide to continue to place the element under follow up for a determined period, should it persist, or remove the element or maintain the element if there are insufficient grounds for removal. This is the procedure laid out in the Operational Directives regarding a request for removal of an element. However, the Operational Directives did not foresee a procedure for the removal of just one part of an element that has been inscribed in its entirety. Thus, there were no rules either allowing or preventing the Committee from doing so, nor could the possibility be ruled out for the Committee to remove only one part of the element. Ultimately, it was up to the Committee to interpret the procedure laid out in the Operational Directives, or the absence thereof, and make a determination in that regard. The Legal Adviser highlighted that should the Committee decide to accept to remove only one part of the element, that decision would essentially imply in its judgement that the Ducasse of Ath no longer meets the criteria for inscription but that the rest of the element and the festival still met the criteria for inscription, even without Ducasse of Ath.
47. The **Chairperson**thanked the Legal Adviser, noting that the elements for determining the assessment of the case were clear despite the unprecedented situation, and the Committee would have to take up its responsibility together. The Chairperson noted the question posed by Côte d’Ivoire to the Secretariat, inviting the Assistant Director-General to respond.
48. The **Assistant-Director General** remarked that there was nothing in the legal texts explaining how to proceed in the scenario evoked by the Côte d’Ivoire should the festival return to the origin of what the other elements of this inscription represent. However, as mentioned by the Legal Adviser, this would depend on the Committee. The procedure should be the same as when there is an inscription or an extension of an element presented by a State Party, that is, not specifically by a community, to re-incorporate the element (in this case the festival) in the spirit of the original inscription, of course, by removing any of the contentious elements, as may be decided by the Committee in this case.
49. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Legal Adviser for his useful advice, noting that the Committee may take the decision to remove a part of the element. However, in this case, *should the Committee apply the procedure* mutatis mutandis *as stipulated in Operational Directives under letter ‘e’ or decide to de-list part of the element at this stage?*
50. The **Legal Adviser** agreed that the procedure was not sufficiently clear in dealing with the removal of only one part of the element. This legal technicality was in fact the legal issue at hand. The second point was the absence of a specific clarification from the procedure [in this case]. Thus, rather than say what the Committee ‘may’ do, as stipulated in the procedure, the Legal Adviser argued that nothing prevented the Committee from *interpreting* the procedure, which is slightly different. The Legal Adviser explained that by saying that the Committee ‘may’ meant basing the notion on some form of rule. However, as he could not point the Committee to any specific rule in this regard, nothing prevented the Committee from doing so under the present circumstances. Again, this would be a question of interpretation of the Operational Directives and the way the Committee intended to proceed.
51. The delegation of **Switzerland** understood that nothing in the text explicitly prevented the Committee from removing one part of the element from the Representative List. However, by doing so, *would the Committee be setting a precedent?* *Would this mean that in other cases, a third party may request that an element or part of an element be de-listed?* Even though it may be far removed from this particular case where there was total unanimity, *would the Committee have created a precedent for doing so?*
52. The **Legal Adviser** remarked that the question was interesting, as it referred to the notion of precedent and the way it should be applied. First of all, if a third party at some point in time should request the removal of an element, there is already a procedure that exists in the Operational Directives, as outlined earlier. Should a third party request the removal of just one part of the element, the decision would indeed constitute a precedent. However, when it comes to precedents, each precedent turns on its own facts. This means that the precedent is based on the circumstances and facts of the specific case. There might be another situation involving a request for removal in which this might constitute a precedent, but not necessarily, because the request might be based on other reasons. The Legal Adviser reiterated that in the absence of a specific procedure on the removal of only one part of the element, this would indeed constitute a precedent. However, just like in all other precedents, they turn on their own facts and they would need to be analysed on a case-by-case basis in order to actually say that the precedent would apply to the following case in point.
53. The delegation of **Rwanda**thanked the Legal Adviser for the clear and precise answers. It noted that the Committee Members agreed in condemning that part of the element, and suggested discussing the proposed amendment and eventually the de-listing of part of the element.
54. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** asked theLegal Adviser to comment on the fact that, at the time of inscription, the contentious part of the element was not mentioned but appeared at the time of the implementation of the element. *What legal qualification is given to such a situation?* Indeed, this aspect of the element was never mentioned at the time of inscription but had forced the Committee to engage in debate even though it should not even have existed. *How can this situation be qualified? Can it be considered as deception?*
55. The **Legal Adviser** did not believe that there was necessarily a legal qualification or characterization for this type of situation. What was important to understand were the facts on how the Committee had actually reached this point, which was clearly explained by the Secretary and the Assistant Director-General. This was formerly an element proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which was then incorporated from the programme to the Representative List in its entirety. The Assistant Director-General of Culture already explained that this was a programme and not part of the Convention. The Legal Adviser therefore could not pronounce on how the element was analysed and proclaimed as a Masterpiece. From a legal standpoint, and as foreseen by the Convention, around eighty elements had been incorporated.
56. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** acknowledged that the element did not follow the process of evaluation and had become incorporated from the Proclamation of Masterpieces of Humanity. Therefore, *did it obey the procedure as adopted and reflected by Convention?*
57. The **Legal Adviser** remarked that all the elements that had been incorporated into the Representative List as former Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity would be covered by the Operational Directives, inviting the Secretariat to respond should it have anything else to add.
58. Noting the time, the **Chairperson** wished to move directly to the examination of the draft decision after the two final speakers, the Observer States of Palestine and the Dominican Republic.
59. The delegation of **Palestine** agreed with the position expressed by many delegations, and it fully supported the amendment presented by Botswana with the immediate removal of this item from the List, which clearly had no place on the Representative List. The delegation recalled the interventions of a number of Committee Members who spoke against its immediate withdrawal and asked to withdraw only part of the element, and who posed procedural questions. However, a precedent had been set, which happened even before the provisions in the Operational Directives. The delegation found surprising the interventions of certain Members of the Committee who asked for time or procedural pretexts to keep the element on the List. Indeed, they did not hold the same positions in a previous case in 2019 concerning the Aalst festival when they asked for the immediate removal of the element from the List. This demonstrated that there were two measures reflecting degrees of racism. This policy of double standards was unacceptable and disappointing.
60. The **Chairperson**noted a point of order called by Switzerland.
61. The delegation of **Switzerland** remarked that everyone was able to express their emotion and their indignation in a spirit that did not polarize the Committee. It appreciated that the Chairperson was able to maintain this spirit of serenity and asked that he continue in this vein. The delegation proposed to move to the examination of the draft decision.
62. The **Chairperson** fully concurred with Switzerland, adding that Palestine had raised concerns that had already been discussed and there was clear unanimity on this matter and there was no question of polarizing the Committee.
63. The delegation of **Dominican** **Republic** remarked that the basic function of the Committee is to promote, supervise and apply the Convention. The Committee should never turn its back on its creative task, which is the implementation and promotion of the Convention. In these circumstances, it would be very serious to remain inactive. If the Committee did not act, it would be renouncing its mandate. There are various legal bodies. Some have laws based on precedent, while others have everything written down, but jurisprudence always plays a role. It was quite clear in these sorts of circumstances that the Committee has to go even further. Indeed, if the Committee continued having these kinds of issues going forward, it will need to consider amending the Operational Directives. This means that a period of time should be provided if it is found that the spirit of the Convention is contravened, for example, a maximum deadline of two years is given to the Committee to ensure that this does not happen again.
64. The **Chairperson** reminded the delegations that Observers were unfortunately unable to propose amendments, but the elements mentioned may indeed have to be discussed at some point, possibly in a working group. The Chairperson proposed to move directly to the draft decision 8.a on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis and consider the amendments proposed by Botswana. With no comments or objections to paragraphs 1–8, they were duly adopted. The Botswana amendment in paragraph 9 would read, ‘Strongly condemns the racist and discriminatory existence of a chained black character called the ‘Sauvage’ of the procession that takes place in the town of Ath (Belgium) that is in contradiction with the founding principles of UNESCO, as well as the requirement of mutual respect under Article 2 of the Convention’.
65. The **Chairperson**noted theCommittee Members that supported the amendment: Angola, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and Uzbekistan. The Chairperson wished to give the floor to Belgium before moving to the adoption of the draft decision.
66. The delegation of **Belgium** heard the debate and understood the shared concerns. In order to prevent any legal questions, Belgium, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium and the Walloon region of Belgium demanded the withdrawal of the Ducasse of Ath *[applause].*
67. The **Chairperson** asked the Legal Adviser to explain the procedure.
68. The **Legal Adviser** believed that the reasoning did not change the situation given the Operational Directives. The procedure laid out in the Operational Directives concerns the removal of an element in its entirety and not just part of an element. Thus, in terms of procedure, Belgium’s withdrawal did not change anything. However, the Committee, if it so wished, could take note that the State Party concerned had expressed the wish to remove the Ducasse of Ath, but in terms of procedure, this did not revert the Committee back to the procedure of the removal of an element because this was not the case.
69. The **Chairperson**noted thatthe Committee would nevertheless adopt the decision to also include Belgium’s request to remove Ducasse of Ath. He suggested adopting paragraph 9, for which there was unanimity, and to include Belgium’s declaration in a new paragraph 10.
70. The **Secretary** took note of Belgium’s request and proposed a paragraph, which would read, ‘Also takes note of the request of the State Party of Belgium at the present session to have the ‘Ducasse of Ath’ removed from the element, ‘Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’.
71. The delegation of **Peru** had a technical question so as to be sure that the withdrawal of that aspect of the element will not impact the entire element. It therefore asked that France, as a State Party in this bi-national inscription, be given the opportunity to express its position.
72. The delegation of **France** considered that if Belgium, the State in whose territory this part of the element is situated, made this proposal, it had no objection to it.
73. The **Chairperson**thanked France, noting that the Committee appeared to agree with the text proposed by the Secretariat.
74. The delegation of **Morocco** wished to replace ‘this session’ with ‘during its seventeenth session’ so as to facilitate its reference in the future.
75. The **Chairperson**noted that there was no objection to paragraph 10 as proposed, which was duly adopted**.** He turned toparagraph 11 and the decision to remove the Ducasse of Ath from the List, which would read, ‘Decides to remove ‘Ducasse of Ath’ of the element ‘Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France’ from the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage’. The same Members (as for paragraph 9) co-sponsored the amendment.
76. The delegation of **Switzerland** shared a discussion taken with its own experts to add to paragraph 11, ‘Decides to remove ‘Ducasse of Ath’ of the element ‘Processional giants and dragons of Belgium and France’ from the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and strongly expresses the wish that the character of the ‘Savage’ be removed from the Ducasse of Ath’. The delegation explained that the discussion focused on the Committee expressing this strong wish given that this part of the element is now removed.
77. The **Chairperson**understood thatthe Committee could express a wish after its removal from the List but that it was also an internal affair in respect of the sovereignty of Belgium, in which the Committee could not intervene. Moreover, its removal already sent a very clear and strong message, and therefore the Committee did not need to express the wish, not least because its position was proclaimed in front of the world. It was now up to Belgium to see how it would follow up on this procession. Nevertheless, the Chairperson had no objections to the proposal by Switzerland should the Committee agree.
78. The delegation of **Switzerland** fully understood the Chairperson’s remarks, but it still wished to hear the opinion of the other Members of the Committee to maintain at least a strong wish that the character of the ‘Savage’ be removed from the Ducasse of Ath.
79. The delegation of **Peru** had no objection and supported Switzerland’s remarks and the removal of the element. However, the Committee and UNESCO could not shy away from its responsibility and therefore it expressed the wish and request that the community make the necessary efforts to also remove the character of the Savage from the element.
80. The delegation of **Ethiopia** believed that the Committee did not have the mandate to wish or coerce a State Party to do something, adding that it would be better to adopt the paragraph as it stood, not least because the Committee had reached its decision following a long debate and had been given due time to correct this situation.
81. The **Chairperson**concurred with this understanding in relation to the Committee’s mandate.
82. The delegation of **Germany** fully understood that it was beyond the Committee’s mandate to express a wish after de-listing. Nevertheless, it supported Switzerland’s position because it was in line with the logic expressed in this session with regard to ethics. The Committee will not take its eyes off the Ducasse of Ath and will continue to watch what is happening. It does not have the mandate to ask for something but nevertheless, the Committee continues to be interested in this element as it cannot let it go. It cannot devolve its responsibility for this element to Belgium or Wallonia. The Committee remained concerned about this matter and should express its disagreement in the form of a wish because there was no other way.
83. The **Chairperson**noted that Germany proposed to adopt paragraph 11 as it stood and to add another paragraph 12 in which the Committee expressed this wish, as proposed by Switzerland. He first turned to paragraph 11 and the correction to ‘the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity’. With no objections, paragraph 11 was duly adopted. The Chairperson invited Switzerland to present its amendment.
84. The delegation of **Switzerland** proposed a paragraph 12, which would read, ‘Expresses the strong wish that the character of the ‘Sauvage’ nevertheless be removed from the ‘Ducasse of Ath’.
85. From the wording, the delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** found that the reason for the strong desire to remove this character was unclear, and wished to add ‘in view of a new extension request’.
86. The **Legal Adviser** did not have a specific legal view on the proposal. It was an issue based on the intention of the Committee, that is, what the Committee intends to highlight with this paragraph. If at some point the Committee and the State Party wished to apply for an extension, that would be a separate matter.
87. The **Chairperson**fully agreed with theLegal Adviser. This paragraph, as worded by Switzerland, had captured the spirit of the Committee in this decision without entering other considerations. Moreover, the Committee did not have the right to pre-empt a situation, and it should also be left to the submitting State to take the Committee’s decision into account.
88. The delegation of **Ethiopia** asked Switzerland to explain the strong wish regarding the character. *What was the implication and the real message to Belgium?*
89. The delegation of **Switzerland** explained that the intention was to ‘request’ the Belgian authorities to remove the Ducasse of Ath part from the element as the Committee no longer had the leverage to request the State Party to do something. This was why the wording was chosen to express a ‘very strong wish’. The delegation was open to better wording that is line with the legal framework, but found ‘strong wish’ to be the strongest possible wording to express its desire to see this element removed.
90. The **Chairperson**noted that the Secretary had suggested ‘urge earnestly’ but he was unsure whether this captured the general sentiment of the Committee.
91. The delegation of **Ethiopia** wished to see expressed that the Belgian Government take the appropriate measures in line with the spirit of the Convention.
92. The **Chairperson**clarifiedthat the decision was not addressing Belgium but rather the communities concerned. Indeed, the Belgian State had made this particular request to the community, as it was perfectly aware of the problem, which was why Belgium had asked for the removal of the element. The Chairperson cautioned against targeting Belgium, noting that this was a delicate issue, and the Committee should not pre-empt the situation.
93. The delegation of **Rwanda**thanked Switzerland for its proposal, expressing the wish that the character of the ‘Savage’ be removed, and suggested to delete ‘nevertheless’.
94. The **Chairperson** took note of the good observation.
95. The delegation of **India** did not find it apt to request the State Party to remove the ‘Savage’ from the celebrations. Indeed, it should include all features that have racist connotations. It is for the State Party to discover all the flawed elements in the practice and not for the Committee to tell the State Party. This was the only route to bringing back the nomination after deleting the elements that have racist connotations. Aside from the ‘Savage’ everything else appeared fine with the nomination.
96. The **Chairperson**concurred withIndia that it was not part of the Committee’s mandate. It should stay within the element discussed and that part of the element that is problematic and not open any other doors. The Committee should thus limit itself to what it had achieved. The Chairperson was of the opinion that the Committee should adopt this decision as proposed without going into other considerations. He then turned to paragraph 12, as proposed by Switzerland. With no objections, it was duly adopted. Paragraph 13 [the original paragraph 11] was thus deleted. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 8.a**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/8.a) **adopted**.
97. The **Chairperson** congratulated all the Members of the Committee for their spirit of solidarity, friendship and fraternity in keeping with the values of UNESCO, thanking Belgium for its decision to withdraw the item.
98. The delegation of **Belgium** assured the Committee that Belgium will continue its work to raise awareness against racism and to ensure that this experience serves as a lesson for the future, leading to a lasting change of mindset in accordance with the principles of the Convention. The delegation would take into account the debates held during this session. This work does not take place in a vacuum. The process of reflection mobilized the whole of Belgian society and was translated into an ambitious framework for political action, as evidenced by the ongoing reform of legislation on intangible heritage in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium, providing ethical principles that align with the requirements of UNESCO, including mutual respect between communities and, more broadly, through the development of an inter-federal action plan to combat racism and xenophobia. Belgium recalled with greatest firmness its condemnation of racism and discrimination in all its forms. Such practices will only cease thanks to an approach guided by openness and living together.
99. The **Chairperson** thanked and congratulated Belgium.
100. The delegation of **France** welcomed the Committee’s decision, which was a logical outcome, given the important, lively and emotional discussions that recalled the essential principles of UNESCO. It is true that the Committee wished to convey the message to the community concerned that this figure of the ‘Savage’ had to be removed, but the concern now was that because this procession had been removed from the List, UNESCO and the international community no longer had any leverage to demand the removal of this totally unacceptable figure. This was already seen in the precedent of the Aalst carnival, which was delisted in 2019, with extreme sanctions occasionally leading to over-radicalization. The delegation was surprised to hear that the Committee was not the place for pedagogy. But *which international organization with a mandate in the field of education is better placed than UNESCO for pedagogy?* Some spoke of double standards, but these double standards very often apply in many recent negotiations on other subjects. Firm condemnations were demanded by some, while others advocated pedagogy and relativized the seriousness of the incriminated facts.
101. The **Chairperson**thanked France but did not believe that the Committee had said during the discussion that UNESCO is not the place for pedagogy. Indeed, he agreed that UNESCO is a forum for pedagogy. What was discussed was that from the moment the Committee adopted its decision to remove the element, which falls within the scope of the Committee’s remit, it should respect and not interfere with the sovereignty of Member States.The Chairperson thanked all the Committee Members and adjourned the morning session.

*[Friday, 2 December, afternoon session]*

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

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

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates back to the afternoon session, recalling the meaningful and important discussion on agenda item 8.a and thanking the Committee Members for their spirit of collaboration and for finding common ground. The Committee was also very happy with the decision to hold the next session of the Committee in Botswana as well as the election of the new Bureau members. The Chairperson looked forward to enjoying the rich culture and hospitality of Botswana in 2023. He then turned to the second part of agenda item 8 and sub-item 8.b [concerning correspondence on two other elements], proposing to adopt the draft decision on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments or objections, paragraphs 1–4 were duly adopted. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 8.b**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/8.b) **adopted**.

**ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/9*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-9-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 9*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/9)

1. The **Chairperson**turned to agenda item 9 and the report of the NGO Forum.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that thiswas the third consecutive session in which the Committee would examine the NGO Forum report as a standalone item. This decision recognized the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention.
3. Mr Leandro Peredo of the **Secretariat** explained that the report was contained in the Annex of the working document. The report presents an overview of the activities undertaken by the Forum over 2021 and 2022, which includes: (a) initiatives at the international level associated with the work of the governing bodies of the Convention; (b) activities to increase the number of NGOs from underrepresented regions; (c) recent organizational developments of the Forum; and (d) the ICH NGO Forum’s views and plans to ensure that accredited NGOs contribute more substantially to the work of the Convention. At its fourteenth session in 2019, in its Decision[14.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/15), the Committee requested that the Secretariat map out the domains of competencies of accredited NGOs in order to explore their untapped potential to provide advisory services to the Committee. In response, the Secretariat established a partnership with the ICH NGO Forum to undertake the mapping exercise. For practical reasons, and as a first round, it was decided that the mapping exercise would cover sixty-five NGOs (one-third of the total number of accredited NGOs at the time when the mapping was initiated). The results highlighted the depth and breadth of the competence and expertise of the NGOs, as well as those areas that warrant further development. This initiative includes the production of individual infographics for each accredited NGO, which presents an overview of the core areas of expertise and domain of competencies of the accredited NGO covered by the mapping exercise. Mr Peredo was pleased to show an example of the results on the screens. The plan was to make all the infographics available for public consultation through the webpage of the Convention and of the ICH NGO Forum.[[28]](#footnote-29)
4. The **Secretary** added that the ICH NGO Forum actually does not benefit from regular financial support for its organizational sustainability. The Committee may therefore wish to encourage States Parties and other potential partners to consider providing financial contributions to the Forum through a modality of their choice. He then presented Mr Laurier Turgeon, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the ICH NGO Forum, and Ms Janet Blake, member of the Steering Committee, to provide a brief overview of the NGO Forum’s report.
5. Mr Laurier Turgeon, **Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the NGO Forum**, thanked the other members of the Executive Board for all of their hard work, dedication, efficiency, spirit of collaboration and collegiality. Ms Janet Blake was the Vice-Chair representing Electoral Group Asia-Pacific, Mr Robert Baron represented the International NGOs and served as Secretary, Mr Martín Andrade-Pérez served as treasurer, representing Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Sekou Berte represented Africa, Ms Tamara Nikolic Deric represented Eastern Europe, and Mr Mohammed Mohamed Lemine Beidieu represented the Arab States. The seven members have equal representation on the Electoral Board covering all regions.[[29]](#footnote-30) The ICH NGO Forum thanked Morocco for hosting this seventeenth session of the Committee. The members of the Forum greatly appreciated the hospitality of the people of Morocco and thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present its annual report.
6. **Ms Janet Blake** explained that the NGO Forum now brought together 217 accredited NGOs working across the world, with a myriad of different competencies in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Its activities are carried out with the participation of communities, and support communities, groups and individuals who practice, perform and transmit intangible cultural heritage. The Forum’s membership ranges from community-based organizations to larger NGOs that support national and international level implementation of the Convention and engage in policy development. As such, it brings to the Convention extensive and highly diverse safeguarding experiences and expertise, which place it in a privileged position for providing advisory services to the Committee, as set out in Article 9 of the Convention. In view of the huge diversity of intangible cultural heritage elements and their related communities, no single organization is capable of providing such advice or of engaging in evaluation and other activities of the Committee. This is a highly significant and distinctive feature of the ICH NGO Forum, setting it apart from many large national NGOs that operate within the framework of other international treaties. The potential roles of accredited NGOs within the Convention were not elaborated at the time of drafting. But the Forum has begun to carve out its place through practice over the past twelve years and is actively giving a voice to the cultural communities it represents. In terms of augmented activities and engagement in 2021–2022, the ICH NGO Forum has completed a major project involving a systematic surveying of accredited NGOs worldwide and has carried out a robust agenda of new activities in 2021–2022 in order to improve its organizational structure and respond to the growing needs of the accredited NGOs, the Secretariat and the Committee. The activities organized by the ICH NGO Forum have attracted the enthusiastic participation of the largest ever number of accredited NGOs during the Committee meetings in 2021 and this meeting in 2022. The online format stimulated participation by its members to a record high of two-thirds of all the accredited NGOs in the statutory meetings in 2021 and 2022. The Forum’s online sessions included many NGOs that had not had the opportunity to attend in person, enabling them to become actively engaged in the Forum. This increase in attendance reflects a more extensive array of services and opportunities provided by the Forum to its members. In 2022, the Forum prioritized tackling the geographic imbalance of accredited NGOs and increasing the participation of those from under-represented regions. A series of concrete actions had also been undertaken in 2022 to increase the number of accredited NGOs in the underrepresented regions undertaken by the Forum’s working group on a more balanced geographical representation of NGOs. These efforts include engagement with regional networks to promote accreditation and may also include workshops, seminars and the involvement of category 2 centres and other accredited NGOs to encourage non-accredited NGOs in their region to apply to the next accreditation cycle, which started in April 2022. The Forum’s activities provided specific instructions about the accreditation process, how to fill out the accreditation form, as well as the benefits of accreditation.
7. **Ms Janet Black** then spoke about thecommission in August 2021 for the ICH NGO Forum to undertake a mapping project on behalf of the Secretariat. This was a high-priority, year-long endeavour of the Executive Board. The mapping project resulted in proposals for revising the accreditation and evaluation forms (ICH-08 and ICH-09), which would enable more effective identification of NGOs that are best equipped to support States Parties and the Secretariat in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It yielded substantially expanded categories and terms for the vocabularies used to index accredited NGOs, and the project’s findings contain extensive information about the competencies and expertise of accredited NGOs that may be readily shared both with other NGOs and with other stakeholders of the Convention. Furthermore, the mapping project enabled the Executive Board to increase its operating budget to develop and finance new projects. One of these was the creation of the Albert van der Zeiden Prize in memory of Albert, who sadly passed away in 2021, for the best article published by an author under 35 years of age in the journal [#HeritageAlive](https://www.ichngoforum.org/heritage-alive/). The prize amounts to €500 and will be awarded for each of the next three issues of the journal. The recipient of the 2022 prize, Ms Laura Lopez, was awarded the prize on 1 December.[[30]](#footnote-31)
8. **Ms Janet Black** further elaboratedthat the ICH NGO Forum had participated in a number of meetings and initiatives to assist NGOs and communities in emergency situations. For example, the Executive Board participated in a meeting convened by UNESCO on 17 March to discuss the safeguarding of heritage in Ukraine at this time of armed conflict, reporting on efforts by the Forum to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in such circumstances. The situation in Ukraine inspired the Steering Committee to consider how the Forum can support intangible cultural heritage that is threatened by situations of conflict or natural disaster. A fundraising campaign was launched in autumn 2022 to seek funding to assist with intangible cultural heritage in any country in the world experiencing such situations of crisis or disasters. Donations could be sent by visiting the ICH NGO website or by contacting the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Forum. The working group on research produced a state-of-the-art web dossier and toolkit on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable tourism.[[31]](#footnote-32) The toolkit was launched online with a webinar on 27 October and is now available on the [ICH NGO Forum website](https://www.ichngoforum.org/). This resource explains basic concepts of first practical knowledge and shares concrete experiences to help bearer communities maximize sustainable tourism development benefits from their intangible cultural heritage. It has already generated two contracts with the World Heritage Centre, which is particularly interested in using it to better manage World Heritage sites.
9. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** turned to the third part of the report and the plans for the future. The ICH NGO Forum brought together in a very short time an ever-increasing number of NGOs accredited to the Convention, becoming their representative governing body, which they now consider as their own. The Forum was created in response to a need for collective representation of NGOs, communities, groups and individuals within the Convention, and the Forum has grown through practice. It has established sound governance practices with well-defined bylaws and election rules that are constantly evolving and improving. Its Executive Council organizes elections every year to elect candidates from each electoral region and one international NGO so that geographical representation is perfectly represented within this governance body. The Forum organizes symposia, conferences, workshops and side events on strategic themes during intergovernmental meetings and the General Assembly for the benefit of its members, but also for delegates, Committee Members and Observers who participate in these activities. The Forum has a well-developed website and newsletter aimed at keeping its members informed and facilitating communication between them. It earns the respect and participation of accredited NGOs, as evidenced by the growing number of NGOs registered for the annual meetings. In the years to come, the Forum wishes to strengthen its advisory functions by taking on new projects for and in collaboration with the Secretariat, the Committee and States Parties. Mr Laurier Turgeon believed that the Forum could greatly contribute to future reflection on the wider implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, based on its systematic inventory of good safeguarding practices through the mapping project just completed. Taking into account the various experiences of accredited NGOs and the internal and ongoing work of the research working group, the Forum could assist the Secretariat in its current work on the three thematic areas, which aim to develop a global approach to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, namely: (a) the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; (b) safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change; and (c) safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts.
10. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** explained thatthe symposium organized by the Forum in 2022 was devoted to living heritage, climate change and the environment in the hope that it will contribute to a reflection on this strategic theme. Despite the emphasis in the Convention on the involvement of non-governmental actors, particularly NGOs and communities, NGOs have not been directly involved in the governance of the Convention. In recent years, the NGO Forum had been invited to present its annual report to the Committee and the General Assembly. This opportunity to present its report at these meetings is much appreciated and has improved communications between NGOs, States Parties and the Secretariat. However, he regretted that the members of the Forum cannot participate in the discussions, or even answer the questions that often follow the presentation of the report to the States Parties. NGOs sit on the Evaluation Body responsible for evaluating requests for inscription of elements on the Lists and requests for financial assistance. However, it was emphasized that their role was largely technical and restricted, consisting of objectively applying criteria in a selection process. This was not a forward-looking role aimed at developing the Convention. A stronger and more effective presence of accredited NGOs throughout the work of the Convention must be concretely identified and formalized. The mapping project clearly demonstrated that the ICH NGO Forum, through the diversity of its members, offers a range of expertise and experience that makes it particularly suited to contribute more substantially to the functioning of the Convention. A more active and direct representation of accredited NGOs in the intergovernmental meetings of the Convention would also considerably strengthen their ability to contribute positively and effectively to the operation of the Convention. The Forum believed that the time had come to reflect on the permanent role that accredited NGOs can play in the implementation of the Convention at national and international levels, as proposed by the Committee, which was initiated in 2017 to achieve a positive conclusion. This role must be defined in specific and concrete terms, and codified in the Operational Directives of the Convention.
11. The **Chairperson**thanked the two representatives of the Forum for their comprehensive presentation. The report clearly demonstrates the important coordinating role that the Forum plays in its work with the NGOs accredited to the Convention, and the suggestions in the report were extremely welcome. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.
12. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Forum for its interesting report and the important results achieved. It was happy to see how the work within the Forum had developed in several important areas and that it was carried out in line with the core of the Convention. The delegation particularly noted the work with safeguarding living heritage in emergencies, the initiatives to increase the number of accredited NGOs from under-represented regions, and the mapping of the domains of competencies of NGOs in collaboration with the Secretariat. One of the conclusions of the report was that the mapping project clearly demonstrated that the Forum “offers a range of expertise and experience that makes it eminently suitable to contribute more substantially to the operation of the Convention.” The question of how to increase NGO participation in the implementation of the Convention is an important issue for its future, and Sweden looked forward to further discussing this issue during the reflection for a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention.
13. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** took note of the Forum reporting on the number of under-represented regions, with Eastern Europe at 11 per cent, Latin America and the Caribbean at 5 per cent and the Arab States at 4 per cent among the accredited NGOs. The delegation highlighted that Saudi Arabia had dedicated units and funds within its governmental sectors to support NGOs in general. As a result, twenty-six NGOs specializing in cultural heritage were established to support the needs of the local communities through research, education and awareness raising. The Ministry of Culture and its commissions have supported the Saudi Heritage Preservation Society, which is an accredited NGO with more than eight works that have been integral in the implementation of the Convention. This includes inventorying performing arts, culinary arts, oral traditions and capacity-building programmes. The delegation encouraged the States of Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Arab States, which are chronically under-represented according to the report, to support and activate NGOs for accreditation in the field of intangible cultural heritage, as the results have been beneficial to local communities in safeguarding their intangible cultural heritage. It thanked the Forum for its inspiring efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and for creating this network that allows for the exchange of knowledge among NGOs around the world.
14. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Forum for the report on its activities, which highlighted the strengthening and mentoring of its organizational structure and the very concept of the ICH NGO Forum. It had strengthened its position as a confident and relevant partner of the Convention. The delegation highly appreciated the hard work of the Steering Committee, noting that its working group systematically addressed the burning issues, such as regional imbalance within the accredited NGO’s membership. It also acknowledged the sincere effort to respond to emergency situations and it welcomed how the Forum, with no hesitation, addressed the threats on intangible cultural heritage caused by armed conflict in Ukraine by launching the Living Heritage for Peace[[32]](#footnote-33) initiative. It had established a fund to support intangible cultural heritage and created a platform for effective reflection on other current and pressing issues. Recalling the debate on sustainable tourism and the important question raised by Panama earlier, the delegation stressed the importance of the creation of the toolkit on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable tourism launched in October 2022. It also greatly acknowledged the publication activities of the Forum and congratulated Ms Laura Lopez for having been awarded the newly established Albert van der Zeiden Prize. Noting the necessity to cooperate and support communities and States Parties in various areas of safeguarding, the delegation spoke of how mapping the domains of competencies of accredited NGOs made it possible to enhance concrete and fruitful cooperation.
15. The delegation of **Burkina Faso**congratulated the NGO Forum for its report, which demonstrated once again the importance of NGOs in the implementation of the Convention, highlighting the important role they play in African countries. It welcomed the commitment of accredited NGOs alongside the governing bodies of the Convention. Burkina Faso also encouraged States, which have the opportunity to support the efforts of these organizations for the considerable support they provide to the Convention. The delegation also welcomed the NGO Forum’s support to the Secretariat in the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention and the thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development.
16. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the NGO Forum for the worthwhile work carried out. Regarding the economic perspective of intangible cultural heritage, this work should be done by both the NGO Forum and communities so that it is carried out in a complementary way. Inaugural intangible cultural heritage is oral performance, whose initial expression in its mother language is a symbol of identity of an individual, a community and a nation. Bangladesh owes its independence on the basis of its mother tongue, Bangla, in the form of movement, struggles and the Liberation War from 1952–1971. Intangible cultural heritage is a decisive instrument of human identity at the national level through ritual and creativity. To make intangible cultural heritage rewarding to humankind, the economic perspective of intangible cultural heritage for individuals and communities is an immediate need. It is clearly related to intellectual property rights for both creative and industrial elements in intangible and tangible forms. It is implicit in the criteria of inscription of an item of intangible cultural heritage with regard to criterion 4, prior and informed consent and, in particular, commercialization for sustainable economic growth. This is also the way to safeguard endangered elements of heritage from disappearance, as embedded in human memory. The delegation called on everyone involved in these interactions to initiate legal protection for equitable distribution and benefit-sharing for all concerned.
17. The **Chairperson** invited the representatives of the NGO Forum to respond.
18. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** thanked all the speakers for their trust and recognition of the work of the Forum, which was much appreciated. As underlined by several of the interventions, the Forum had been working very hard on geographical imbalance, reminding the Committee that there is perfect geographical representation in the governing bodies of the Forum. Each region is represented by one seat. This had been a way to deal, at least partially, with the more general geographical imbalance, on which the Forum had spent a great deal of time. The Forum had a working group especially established in 2021 to work on geographical imbalance and an action plan. The Forum would also be working with some category 2 centres in the different regions to assist them in encouraging NGOs to apply in this cycle, with 23 April the deadline for applications of new accredited NGOs. The Forum very much appreciated the concern of States Parties and especially Saudi Arabia for supporting this initiative. From the States Parties’ point of view, this is very important because it helps the Forum solve this problem of geographical imbalance, for which the active role of States Parties is also extremely important.
19. **Ms Janet Blake** reminded the Committee that among accredited NGOs were members who are global facilitators for this Convention, while others have lengthy experience in intergovernmental processes in different ways and who perhaps have also sat behind the nameplate of their country in such meetings. In other words, as much as the Forum is a very important resource in terms of grassroots activities and connections, its expertise extends right through to the intergovernmental level as well.
20. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to Observers.
21. The delegation of **Lithuania** thanked and congratulated the NGO Forum for its very important and comprehensive report, welcoming its considerable work in several areas, particularly the Forum’s rapid reaction to the war situation in Ukraine and the initiative of solidarity ‘Living Heritage for Peace’. It particularly appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Forum to increase the number of NGOs, which represents the highest priority in the implementation of the Convention. Geographical imbalance among accredited NGOs remained a major concern. Lithuania does not yet have any accredited organizations, and its Electoral Group remained under-represented. However, it was hoped this will change in the near future. The delegation believed that the important outreach programme could probably expand in the future and include not only unrepresented groups but also under-represented groups more directly and more actively. In this sense, it strongly appreciated the intention of the Forum to draw up recommendations for a simplification of the form. The delegation particularly looked forward to an impressive series of publications of #HeritageAlive,[[33]](#footnote-34) which celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2022. These publications provide knowledge on a whole range of intangible cultural heritage that is much broader and more open than intangible cultural heritage relating solely to the safeguarding initiatives and practices of accredited organizations. Several other activities of the Forum were greatly appreciated. The delegation wished the Forum every success in its future activities, thanking it once again for the work accomplished.
22. The delegation of **Norway** thanked the Forum for the report and for its work. NGOs are vital partners in the implementation of the Convention both at national and international levels. On the national level, NGOs have a practice-based approach to the Convention and are close to the communities. This is in the spirit of the Convention and makes them an important dialogue partner for States Parties in its implementation. On the international level, the Forum and all its activities play an important role in raising awareness of safeguarding efforts. The delegation looked forward to following the discussion on the role of NGOs in the work of the Convention in the future.
23. The **Director of CRESPIAL**,[[34]](#footnote-35) the category 2 centre in Latin America, thanked the Forum for its report, informing the Committee that it had worked alongside the Forum to prepare a training session for NGOs in Latin America to help familiarize them with the mechanism of accreditation so that they can become part of the Forum and thus remedy the geographical imbalance. CRESPIAL was joining forces to ensure that communities in Latin America working with NGOs are represented in this space. She took the opportunity to thank UNESCO and the Government of Peru for enabling CRESPIAL to carry out its work.
24. The **Chairperson** noted no other requests for the floor and turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/9) **adopted.**

**ITEM 10 OF THE AGENDA:**

**UPDATE ON THE REFLECTION ON THE BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/10*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-10-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 10*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/10)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to an important agenda item 10 on the update on the reflection on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that this item was an outcome of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. Indeed, as part of the discussions at its sixteenth session, the Committee decided to initiate a new reflection for a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, which was made possible thanks to the generous contribution by Sweden. According to Article 18 of the Convention, the Committee “shall periodically select and promote national, subregional and regional programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the heritage which it considers best reflects the principles and objectives of this Convention […]”. In order to implement this provision, a mechanism of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices was established in 2009 soon after the Convention entered into force. However, time and again it had been pointed out by the Committee that the Register is significantly underutilized compared to the other two Lists of the Convention. This was brought up again during the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. The Committee was thus being asked to formally establish the main initial reflection topics on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention. The first topic concerned improving the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices with the aim to improve the utilization of the Register itself. During the global reflection, selection criterion P.9[[35]](#footnote-36) was discussed and it was decided to delete that criterion. But the Open-ended working group felt that more discussion was needed for the other criteria. The possibility to further reduce or refine criteria may therefore be discussed under the new reflection.
3. The **Secretary** explained that the second topic concerned the possibility of creating an ‘observatory’ for sharing good safeguarding practices, which could be further explored as a way to encourage dialogue and communications among stakeholders of the Convention for the purposes of sharing good safeguarding practices. This could include the communities whose elements are inscribed on the Lists, as well as other actors in safeguarding. This consideration follows the request of the Committee (Decision[16.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/16.COM/14)) and echoes paragraph 3 of Article 18 of the Convention, which states that “the Committee shall accompany the implementation of such projects, programmes and activities by disseminating best practices using means to be determined by it”. The third topic was intentionally kept open to give Committee Members and those taking part in the reflection a chance to consider any other issues yet to be identified. In terms of the ways forward, as indicated in the working document, it was proposed that the reflection process follow a similar multi-step approach to the reflection process on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, that is, if the Committee agrees with the suggested timeline, a category VI meeting of experts will be convened in the first half of 2023. This would lay the groundwork for the meeting of an Open-ended intergovernmental working group in the second half of 2023. This would be followed by additional intergovernmental discussions during the eighteenth session of the Committee in Botswana in 2023. Based on those discussions, the Committee will determine whether the process could be completed by the tenth session of the General Assembly in mid-2024. This session of the Assembly would then examine the draft amendments to the Operational Directives. Indeed, the Register’s potential still needed to be fully explored, as implementation of Article 18 goes beyond just that mechanism. The Secretariat was excited to start a new reflection that it hoped will further develop the outreach and usefulness of the Convention.
4. The delegation of **Sweden** was grateful to the Secretary and the Secretariat for this presentation of this item. Sweden underlined the importance of the reflection process on Article 18, an essential yet underutilized part of the Convention. It has an important role to play for States Parties as well as for NGOs, communities and practitioners in order to share experiences, raise visibility and learn from different safeguarding practices. Sweden was happy to be able to support the reflection process and it looked forward to further discussions with experts, States Parties and others. Sweden was glad to host the category VI meeting in Stockholm in the first quarter of 2023. It was also happy to chair the intergovernmental working group to be held in Paris later in 2023.
5. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** firmly believed that the new reflection on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention truly purports to achieve the mandate of the Convention, that is, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. For that reason, it strongly supported this reflection initiated by Sweden. The Republic of Korea was willing to actively participate in this project, sharing ideas and experiences of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It believed that the vast diversity of circumstances of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in different parts of the world should be considered and it looked forward to seeing the many good, shared safeguarding practices, customized to the different contexts of each society.
6. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Sweden for supporting this reflection and thanked the Secretariat for the valuable work on this topic so far. It welcomed the deletion of criterion P.9 by the General Assembly in 2022 and it encouraged additional dialogue and actions to be taken to further reflect and adjust the other criteria. The delegation looked forward to a better interconnectedness between the Lists and the Register and to enriching the listing mechanisms with inspiring examples. It also welcomed all three topics proposed for reflection. The delegation invited the future participants of this meeting to reflect on how to raise visibility of good safeguarding practices that further promote the ethical principles decided at the session of the Committee in 2015 and, particularly, the specific attention to UNESCO Priority Agenda questions, and the design and implementation of safeguarding measures.
7. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for comments by Observers.
8. The delegation of **Belgium** applauded this initiative, concurring that the Register has been underutilized but that Article 18 has also been underutilized. For example, the dormant Operational Directive I.3 paragraph 4, which has existed since 2008, reads “At each session the Committee may explicitly call for proposals characterized by international cooperation, as mentioned in Article 19 of the Convention, and/or focusing on specific priority aspects of safeguarding.” Fourteen years on, this Operational Directive has not yet been used by the Committee although it offers tools for the Committee to steer, inspire and influence. The way Article 18 is formulated offers great possibilities, as it does not explicitly mention one register but is an open invitation to the Committee to periodically select and promote national, regional and subregional programmes, projects and activities. It was hoped that under topic three the reflection would go beyond one register and beyond one observatory. For instance, capturing the lessons learned and interesting programmes, projects and activities noted in the examination of the periodic reports, now inspired by the overall results framework. In addition, utilizing the possibilities of electronic platforms and ways to involve NGOs, UNESCO Chairs and other actors. The delegation thanked Sweden, adding that topic three might be the best birthday gift of the twenty years of this Convention.
9. The delegation of the **Netherlands** thanked the Chairperson for his leadership and Morocco for its hospitality. The Netherlands has always supported alternate and lighter ways to share good safeguarding practices for the Lists, including the Register. It thanked Sweden for organizing a separate reflection on Article 18 of the Convention, expressing its interest in participating in the upcoming reflection. The Netherlands supported the initial reflection topics, and it hoped that this reflection will result in improved methods of promoting and disseminating good safeguarding practices, whether in the Register or not. The delegation also supported further reduction of the criteria, with a goal of establishing a lighter filtering and validation mechanism in order to share as many good examples as possible. This reflection process is a chance to build towards a tool to showcase the breadth of information related to the safeguarding of intangible heritage. In the Netherlands, communities are very eager to learn from international examples, especially when a community meets difficulties during safeguarding. At the same time, communities, and sometimes NGOs, perceive that information and tools on the UNESCO website are not aimed at them and therefore do not use them. The delegation looked forward to contributing to the establishment of an online platform on a global basis with regional rules, which should be built around the needs of communities. It encouraged the Secretariat to involve NGOs in this project.
10. The **Secretary** thanked the Committee Members and Observers for their encouraging comments and feedback. He agreed that there was a lot more to discuss, but making use of online possibilities – a topic the Secretariat had learned a lot about over these last two or three years – had provided possibilities to create networks and connections that were more difficult before. The Secretariat believed that the ‘observatory’ was going in the direction of creating a platform for exchange, an online mechanism. The Secretary took note of the remarks on the Convention website. The Secretariat tries to present news in a more approachable manner but, of course, statutory documents were not necessarily accessible to communities in a language they understand. The Secretary thanked the speakers for their ideas, reassuring them that their comments were in line with the Secretariat’s proposed topics for reflection. Indeed, this was an exciting time to think outside of the box and see how the Convention can become a platform for greater exchange and sharing of good safeguarding practices, as well as more exchange between people from around the world who are committed to safeguarding living heritage.
11. The **Chairperson** turned to the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, **the Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/10) **adopted**.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA:**

**STRATEGY FOR THE MONITORING, EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF LESSONS LEARNT FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/11*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-11-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 11*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/11)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 11 and the strategy for the monitoring, evaluation and identification of lessons learnt for International Assistance, one of the pillars of the international cooperation mechanism under the Convention that has been in operation since 2008. This strategy constitutes an important step for the International Assistance mechanism.
2. The **Secretary** explained that the Secretariat wished to present a strategy for monitoring and evaluating the International Assistance mechanism, which first became operational in 2008 but which underwent significant reform in 2017 and 2018 when a team was created. Indeed, International Assistance has become an increasingly important tool, on the one hand, for supporting safeguarding actions at the country level and, on the other hand, for obtaining useful information regarding the implementation of the Convention. Through requests received, the Secretariat sees the interest of communities and States in terms of the Convention’s implementation. The Secretariat therefore felt that it is important to establish a systematic system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this mechanism to complement reports submitted by States having received assistance. The initiative is supported by, firstly, the recommendation of the 2021 IOS evaluation of UNESCO’s action in the framework of the Convention, as well as by the General Assembly’s decision at its seventh session authorizing the use, on an experimental basis, of an amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the approved budget of each International Assistance project to monitor and assess the impact of projects supported by the Fund.
3. Ms Juliana Forero of the **Secretariat** presented the objective and planned actions of the strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of the International Assistance mechanism. The objective of the strategy is to establish a systematized approach whereby the monitoring and evaluation of each individual International Assistance project will feed into the overall monitoring and evaluation of the International Assistance mechanism. The goal is to better track the effectiveness of the mechanism in contributing to the implementation of the Convention, and to do so by aligning its monitoring and evaluation with the twenty-six core indicators of the overall results framework of the Convention based on Recommendation 6[[36]](#footnote-37) of the 2021 IOS evaluation. Planned actions related to enhancing monitoring included the revision of the ICH‑04 forms for submitting and reporting projects, to allow for the collection of meaningful qualitative and quantitative data, at the individual project level, on sustainable development and including gender equality, among other areas. Monitoring shall be undertaken both by the implementing agency and the Secretariat, with the idea that the communities and stakeholders involved in the project should play a central part in its monitoring so that their concerns and aspirations can be taken into account. Actions related to enhancing evaluation will take place at the project level. Evaluation will be conducted by experts identified by the Secretariat. A new evaluation form has been designed to support the strategy and to ensure a common framework for assessments. Furthermore, an expansion of the Convention’s knowledge management system will form an important part of the strategy in order to cope with a large amount of qualitative and quantitative data. The enhanced system will serve to consolidate the combined results of individual projects and to better disseminate results, impact, lessons learned and good practices of the International Assistance mechanism. The implementation of the strategy will start operating from January 2023 to evaluate projects finalized in the second semester of the current year. The financial implications of the strategy will be reported on a biannual basis as part of the financial reporting on the use of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. In sum, the combined safeguarding experience of different individual projects will in turn make up the ‘operationality’ of the mechanism in terms of its contribution to the implementation of the Convention as a whole.
4. With no requests for the floor from the Committee, the **Chairperson** opened the floor for comment to Observers.
5. The delegation of **Netherlands** echoed the first sentence of the working document, “International Assistance is one of the pillars of the international cooperation mechanism under the 2003 Convention”, adding that it strongly supported the strategy. Analysing the impact of these projects will help communities to safeguard their intangible heritage in the long term. The Netherlands called upon the Secretariat to adjust the strategy in one part. It was very much in favour of giving communities and NGOs a more central role in the strategy and not only the States Parties, as currently stated in the document under paragraph 13. Following this proposal, the implication will be that the whole process must be designed with this additional goal in mind. The delegation asked the Secretariat to use the rich data the strategy will produce to develop knowledge and tools that directly benefit the communities and NGOs. The Netherlands saw interesting links between the possible information and tools focused on communities and NGOs coming from the strategy and the online observatory of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding proposed in the Article 18 reflection. It believed that it would strengthen the visibility and use of the invaluable knowledge as an output of this strategy. It hoped that this link will be taken into account during the reflection on Article 18.
6. The delegation of **Jamaica** congratulated the Chairperson on his able handling of this meeting and appreciated the hospitality of Morocco. It took note that International Assistance projects are not only a budgetary mechanism but also an instructive one in all the key aspects of the Convention, thus providing a toolkit with the information necessary for the safeguarding of the Convention. It looked forward to the successful implementation of the reflection in 2023. Jamacia, and indeed much of the Caribbean, have benefitted from projects under this initiative, and it looked forward to participating in the future reflection.
7. The **Chairperson** turned to the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, **the Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 11**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/11) **adopted**.

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/12*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-12-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 12*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/12)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the next agenda item 12 on the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: additional voluntary contributions and other matters. In accordance with Article 25.5 and Article 27 of the Convention, it is the responsibility of the Committee to approve additional voluntary contributions to the Convention Fund made by States Parties in addition to their mandatory annual contributions. It was recalled that during its sixteenth session in 2021, the Committee approved two funding priorities for the 2022–2025 period, namely: (a) Strengthening 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 **Secretary**recalled that in accordance with Decision[16.COM 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/12), the Secretariat is requested to report on progress in the implementation of any voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund that it may have received since its last session, as well as to report on all voluntary contributions received since the Committee’s previous session, in accordance with Decision[7.COM 20.1](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.COM/20.1). Working document 12 provides an overview of the support received by the Convention from 1 January to 30 June 2022.
3. Mr Julien Nakata of the **Secretariat** explained that the voluntary contributions are intended primarily for the implementation of the two funding priorities approved in 2021, but also other activities that cannot be supported by UNESCO’s limited Regular Programme resources. In the first half of 2022, three additional voluntary contributions were made to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for a total amount of US$189,277. The first six months of 2022 were marked by a slight increase in the amount of additional voluntary contributions compared to the same period of the previous biennium, when voluntary contributions represented US$102,600. Regarding funding priority 1 on the capacity-building programme, from January to June 2022, only one contribution was made to the Fund from the Republic of Korea via the ICHCAP,[[37]](#footnote-38) for a capacity-building project for the implementation of the Convention in Tanzania. The amount of US$81,271 represents 1.6 per cent of the mobilization target set for the 2022–2025 period. To give an overview of the support given to this priority, no less than 27 capacity-building projects and activities were currently financed by voluntary contributions in various forms, whether additional voluntary contributions to the Fund, Funds-in-Trust or additional appropriations under UNESCO’s Regular Programme from governments, category 2 centres, NGOs or the private sector. Of these 27 projects, 6 projects and activities were initiated by UNESCO Field Offices and Headquarters during the period covered in Asia and the Arab States as well as at the global level.
4. **Mr Julien Nakata** presented funding priority 2 on intangible cultural heritage in education. Although States Parties recognize the importance of this thematic, no additional voluntary contributions to the Fund were received during the first semester of 2022. However, there was a new additional voluntary contribution from Flanders (Belgium) through a Funds-in-Trust to support a project for the integration of intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education in Southern Africa. This project was currently being implemented by the UNESCO Regional Office in Harare. In the first half of 2022, priority 2 was implemented through four projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Regarding the strengthening of the human resources of the Secretariat, in particular, the sub-fund, which was created for this purpose, since the sixteenth session of the Committee in December 2021, two voluntary contributions had been received from France and Lithuania, for a total amount of US$108,006, corresponding to 6 per cent of the biennial target set by the General Assembly in June 2020. In addition to these two voluntary contributions, two in-kind contributions were received from China in 2022. Mr Nakata concluded by mentioning the support for the Convention coming from governments, category 2 centres, United Nations funds and the private sector. Thanks to these contributions, 12 projects were currently being implemented, in particular, the broader reflection on the implementation of Article 18, just discussed, but also themes as broad as the safeguarding of cultural heritage in urban contexts or specific areas of sustainable development, such as peacebuilding. Given that the reporting period covered by the working document ended in June 2022, the Secretary wished to bring to the Committee’s attention more recent voluntary contributions.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the excellent presentation, inviting the Secretary to present the recent contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.
6. The **Secretary** underlined that while the Convention was receiving significant support, it was through tightly earmarked modalities, such as Funds-in-Trusts agreements, with the targets for both funding priorities continuously not being reached in terms of voluntary supplementary contributions. The situation was the same for the sub-fund for the human resources of the Secretariat. In that sense, the Committee may wish to encourage donors to support the Convention through voluntary supplementary contributions so as to enable the Secretariat to continue implementing projects for the safeguarding of living heritage and developing new initiatives, with the proper means to achieve the objectives set out by the General Assembly for the quadrennium. The Secretary reminded the Committee that the Secretariat was embarking on the preparations for periodic reporting in Africa in 2023. This is a once in a six-year opportunity to work closely with all the ministries of culture to understand and reinforce the institutional infrastructure for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the region. The Secretariat therefore called on States in a position to do so to consider supporting this process with much-needed funding so that all countries in the region may participate and benefit from the exercise. The Secretary informed the Committee of several recent voluntary supplementary contributions following the reporting period. The Netherlands contributed €35,000 to support capacity building in preparing nomination files for the Lists of the Convention in SIDS in the Caribbean. This responded in part to the concerns raised by the Committee about the geographical imbalance of elements inscribed. It was hoped that additional contributions would be received from other donors to roll out similar projects in other regions. Monaco also generously provided €10,000 to the sub-fund to enhance the human resources of the Secretariat. The Secretariat was grateful to both States Parties for their generous and renewed commitment, as well as to all the States that contributed during the reporting period.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked all the States that have agreed to contribute to this Fund, which is extremely important and useful for the operation and preservation of intangible heritage. With no requests for the floor, the Chairperson turned to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 12**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/12) **adopted.**
8. The **Chairperson** noted the end of the day’s agenda, reminding the Committee that the voting for the election of the Evaluation Body would take place the next day under agenda item 14. The day’s session was adjourned.

*[Saturday, 3 December, morning session]*

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates to the final day, presenting the remaining agenda items for examination. He informed the Committee that all the decisions had been circulated earlier and would be adopted by the Committee later in this morning session. For the remaining decisions, the Rapporteur would be entrusted to validate them accordingly. The Secretariat published the [final decisions](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-Decisions-EN.docx) at the end of 2022.
2. The **Secretary** wished to correct an error mentioned earlier concerning the contribution by the Netherlands, which was US$75,000 and not €35,000 as stated. This amount was greatly appreciated and, as a non-earmarked contribution, the Secretariat will be able to address a specific issue that arose during this Committee, which is the under-representation of SIDS in the Caribbean. This contribution will go directly towards training on preparing nomination files, which had already been organized with the UNESCO Office in Kingston. The Secretary invited the participants to complete the satisfaction survey on the organization of this seventeenth session, whose important feedback would improve organizational aspects of the meeting.

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION BODY FOR THE 2023 CYCLE**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/14*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-14_Rev._3-EN.docx) *Rev.3*

**Decision:** [*17.COM 14*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/14)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 14 and the establishment of the Evaluation Body.
2. Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the **Secretariat** explained that the item was divided into two parts. Part I concerned the voting to elect new members of the Evaluation Body under the 2023 cycle, and Part II was the announcement of the results of the election. Under this item, the Committee was invited to adopt the terms of reference of the Evaluation Body (in Annex I of the working document). The Committee was also asked to appoint four new members of the Evaluation Body. There were four vacant seats to be filled: a seat for an expert from Electoral Group I; a seat for an expert from Electoral Group II; a seat for an expert from Electoral Group V(a); and a seat for an NGO from Electoral Group V(a). The Committee would also re-appoint the eight members elected in previous years. Candidates were proposed by States Parties concerned through the Chairperson of each Electoral Group. According to Decision[9.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.COM/11), States are encouraged to ensure that at least two candidates are sent by the Chairperson of the Electoral Group, and according to paragraph 28 of the Operational Directives, a maximum of three candidates can be proposed. Candidatures received per Electoral Group were as follows: three expert candidates for Group I; three expert candidates for Group II; one expert candidate for Group V(a); and three NGO candidates for Group V(a) (see the list of candidates in Annex 2 of the working document, containing websites and applications for accreditation in the case of NGOs, and CVs in the case of experts).
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** presented the terms of reference for the establishment of the Evaluation Body for the 2023 cycle. The mandate of the Evaluation Body is defined in paragraphs 27 and 30 of the Operational Directives. This includes 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. At the same time, this was the last cycle in which the Body will be tasked with evaluating International Assistance requests greater than US$100,000 following the revision of the Body’s mandate by the ninth session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, following the completion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, the proposed terms of reference include the following four new tasks assigned to the Body in line with the new provisions of the Operational Directives: (a) the evaluation of transfer requests between the two Lists (paragraph 30 of the Operational Directives); (b) the evaluation of International Assistance requests submitted in the context of a transfer request from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List (paragraph 27 of the Operational Directives); (c) the possibility of including a successful safeguarding experience in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, following a transfer request (paragraph 39.3 of the Operational Directives); and (d) evaluating an element placed under the ‘enhanced follow-up’ status (paragraph 40.3(a) of the Operational Directives). The Committee would proceed with a vote by secret ballot in order to choose the new members of the Body, and would do so in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, in particular, Section B of Rule 39. For the seat of one expert for Group V(a), the number of candidates corresponded to the number of vacant seats, so this was a clean slate situation. Therefore, the expert was elected automatically without a vote. Thus, the election by secret ballot would only concern the three other vacant seats. Continuing the practice introduced at its fourteenth session in 2019, the Committee was asked to determine the alphabetical sequence in which files would be evaluated and examined so as to avoid following the same order on each occasion by always beginning with files from States whose first letter started at the beginning of the English alphabet. Concretely, a letter would be drawn by lot under this item.
4. The **Chairperson** proposed to proceed in the order in which the Secretariat introduced the work by first asking the Committee to adopt the terms of reference of the Evaluation Body for the 2023 cycle (in Annex 1 of working document). Then, the Committee will proceed to designate the two tellers to monitor the election. The Members of the Committee will then proceed to vote. Finally, item 14 would be suspended. The Chairperson proceeded with the adoption of the terms of reference, which reflected the revisions of the Operational Directives by the ninth session of the General Assembly following the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. He proposed to adopt the terms of reference as a whole, which were duly adopted. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to explain the procedure of voting by secret ballot.
5. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that the Secretariat would distribute three ballots to all Committee members, one for each vacant seat, and an envelope. Each member of the Committee had to clearly express its choice for each vacant seat, and not only for the vacant seat of its Electoral Group. The candidate with the most votes will be elected. On each ballot were listed the names of all the candidates for each seat. Members were requested to encircle the names of the candidates for whom it wished to vote, then fold the ballots, place them in the envelope and seal it. The envelope should not bear any inscription. The absence of a ballot in the envelope would be considered an abstention. The ballots containing more names selected than the number of seats to be filled, as well as ballots that do not bear any mention of the intention to vote, were considered invalid.
6. The **Chairperson**noted no questions and sought two volunteers to serve as tellers. With the help of the Bureau, two people were identified: Ms Soukaina Filali from Morocco and Mr Aneish Rajan from India, who joined the podium. After a five-minute pause, the Chairperson invited the Secretariat to proceed with the roll call to collect the ballots of each delegation, which was made in French alphabetical order of the Member States of the Committee.
7. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** began the roll call: 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; Viet Nam voted. All twenty-four Committee Members voted.
8. The **Chairperson**noted that all the envelopes had been collected. While the votes were counted, item 14 was suspended.

**ITEM 13 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/13*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-13-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 13*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/13)

1. The **Chairperson** proceeded to agenda item 13 on thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that since 2021, the Secretariat has undertaken efforts in specific thematic areas to contribute to a holistic approach to living heritage safeguarding and sustainable development, in line with Chapter VI of the Operational Directives. Initial efforts focused on three specific areas. These specific areas responded both to discussions that took place in the Committee, as well as to some of the overall priorities of UNESCO and the Culture Sector. Concerning the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, this thematic initiative was launched following Decision[14.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/10) taken by the Committee in 2019, which requested that the Secretariat ‘publish the recommendations of the Evaluation Body on the safeguarding measures and good practices that address the risk of decontextualization and over-commercialization of elements in a guidance note for communities and States Parties.’ The Secretariat proceeded first with a compilation of past decisions from the governing bodies of the Convention, the recommendations of Evaluation Bodies, a review of the existing literature, and the development of an initial set of case studies from different regions around the world to highlight the contribution of living heritage to sustainable livelihoods. Following this first step, a global survey was sent in October 2022 to more than 1,000 stakeholders of the Convention, including national authorities, accredited NGOs, category 2 centres, and the contact persons for all elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention. The Secretary was pleased to report that it received 153 responses from about 70 countries. This showed the wide interest of the living heritage community for this particular issue. The finalized guidance note would be made available in 2023. This guidance note, along with the survey, would provide a basis for further reflection under this thematic initiative, with the possible organization of an expert meeting on this issue to be held in 2023 or 2024, pending the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources or funding.
3. The **Secretary** then spoke of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change. In line with paragraph 191 of the Operational Directives as well as the operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, the Secretariat had implemented pilot projects funded by Switzerland in Honduras and the Philippines. This brought together living heritage experts and disaster management specialists to enhance capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in disaster contexts. In April 2022, a three-year project funded by Japan was launched for safeguarding living heritage in disaster contexts in five SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean. A global survey was launched for this thematic area in late October 2022, soliciting examples and experiences on the dual nature of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies as a result of climate change. So far, sixty-five responses from twenty-nine countries had been received. The results of the survey will feed into a guidance note, which will incorporate the results of a scoping review of the literature undertaken by the Secretariat earlier in 2022. Finally, in the third thematic area, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, since 2018, the Secretariat has implemented a multi-year extra-budgetary project called ‘Intangible Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities’, which was implemented in six selected cities in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, and the Arab States, thanks to the support from the private sector of the People’s Republic of China. The project aimed to promote the role of culture in sustainable urban development and, more specifically, address the role that living heritage can play in building sustainable cities. Based on the results of these pilot projects on community-based inventories in cities, the Secretariat began developing guidelines and policy recommendations for the implementation of the Convention in urban contexts. This also involved carrying out a global survey between October and November 2022 to address issues such as ways to identify living heritage in cities, threats to intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, as well as potential recommendations when living heritage can contribute to the ecological, economic and social structures of cities. So far, sixty-seven responses from thirty-four countries had been received. Once again, a guidance note on living heritage and urban planning is currently under development and will outline a framework for integrating living heritage into urban planning for urban planners, policymakers, living heritage communities and stakeholders.
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 the **Republic of Korea** welcomed the significant progress made by the Secretariat in implementing the newly launched thematic initiatives on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in relation to economic dimensions, climate change and urban contexts. the Republic of Korea particularly noted that urbanization has increasingly influenced the way we live and safeguard intangible cultural heritage. The delegation extended sincere gratitude for the Secretariat’s continued efforts in preparing a guidance note on living heritage in urban planning. It was expected that this new initiative will pave the way for further clarifications on the various roles of communities in future urban plans, thereby increasing participation from various intangible cultural heritage stakeholders in the safeguarding process. This is an attempt to align the intangible cultural heritage safeguarding initiatives with the broader goals of sustainable development, thus reaffirming the relevance of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the global society in the twenty-first century and contextualizing intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the world we live.
6. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked the Secretariat for the report and the clarifications on the thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development. The document itself is self-explanatory, though it sought a clarification concerning the global survey that was launched in October concerning the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Out of the responses of 1,000 stakeholders of the Convention, the delegation asked *what* *were the positive and negative effects of commercialization relating to the elements of intangible cultural heritage?*
7. The delegation of **Japan**remarked that the country experiences many natural disasters, and it was able to see how intangible cultural heritage plays an important role in the recovery of communities affected by disasters. For example, on the coast of Sanriku, which was badly damaged by the 2011 tsunami, the affected people, even if they had lost their homes and could no longer live in their hometowns, gathered in their old towns only during the day of the traditional lion dance and made cardboard lion heads to perform the traditional dance, bringing the communities together again. Based on this experience, Japan is supporting a three-year project to safeguard living heritage in emergency situations in five States in the Pacific and the Caribbean, in particular, those prone to the effects of climate change. It was hoped that intangible heritage will continue to be an important source of resilience for communities.
8. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretary to respond to the question posed by Ethiopia.
9. The **Secretary** thanked Ethiopia for the question concerning the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and the positive and negative effects of the economic approach. The Secretariat was still in fact in the process of analysing all the responses, so he gave a broad context and response. At this stage, the Secretariat was still refining the results, but it was clear from the discussions in this session and in previous sessions that there were many communities that cannot continue to practice their living heritage without it providing a source of livelihood. In this sense, the economic dimension exactly provides the prospect of safeguarding, as it makes intangible cultural heritage viable. In such a case, the economic approach is obviously beneficial to communities. This is particularly the case for crafts and performing arts. If communities cannot live, many of these elements will be threatened precisely because communities cannot make a living from them, which they have done over centuries. *What are the negative effects?* The negative effects occur when intangible cultural heritage practices become decontextualized and distorted for the sake of making money. This begged the questions: *Where are the lines to be drawn and what about the principles?* *How does the Convention approach this in a coherent way, a way that is not* ad hoc *or reactive but which follows some guidelines?* This is what the Secretariat is trying to elaborate through this process. This may also have an impact on some of the discussions around nominations. Hence, the purpose of this exercise, which was to get a full and detailed answer on these issues.
10. The delegation of **Panama** thanked the Secretariat for the report and the survey, explaining that 25 per cent of the national population live in the capital with an Afro-descendant or indigenous population in the cities that cannot express or practice their living heritage because they live in the suburbs or so-called ‘red zones’. Thanks to this survey, Panama was able to contact local communities and talk about the importance of living heritage. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for this useful initiative.
11. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** opened the floor toObservers.
12. The delegation of **Jamaica** noted the work implemented in relation to the thematic initiatives and thanked the Secretariat for the report. Jamaica was particularly interested in the initiatives that engaged traditional knowledge systems, not only in increasing resilience among communities but also on how climate change can in fact devastate knowledge bearers, traditions and associated cultural sites. It also thanked UNESCO for including Kingston as one of the pilot cities in the project, ‘Intangible Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities’. Indeed, significant benefits had been observed throughout this project among its stakeholders. The delegation believed that it is important to discuss the economic benefits associated with intangible heritage practices, and it recognized this need in many communities to maintain their livelihoods. This is experienced in the Caribbean, and there were likely many other regions as well that would not be able to practice their traditions without the many economic benefits.
13. The delegation of **Samoa** expressed gratitude to Morocco for its warm hospitality. Through its new National Plan, the Government has given priority to promoting intangible heritage. It supported the Committee’s new initiatives for living heritage for sustainable development. Samoa continued in its efforts to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage and nominations to the Convention. Samoa noted with thanks the discussions and information shared in this meeting. However, it asked the Committee to note the challenges facing SIDS with capacity-building, not with just technical resources but also human resources.
14. The **Chairperson** turned to the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Decision**[**17.COM 13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/13) **adopted**.

**ITEM 15 OF THE AGENDA:**

**NUMBER OF FILES SUBMITTED FOR THE 2022 AND 2023 CYCLES AND NUMBER OF FILES THAT CAN BE TREATED IN THE 2024 AND 2025 CYCLES**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/17.COM/15*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-15-EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*17.COM 15*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/15)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 15 and the number of files submitted for the 2022 and 2023 cycles, and the number of files that can be treated in the 2024 and 2025 cycles. This is an important issue that had been discussed at great length by the Committee and the Open-ended working group during the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. At its ninth session in July 2022, the General Assembly set the number of files that can be treated in a given cycle at no more than sixty.
2. The **Secretary** reiterated that the General Assembly had adopted a decision and a revision to the Operational Directives. The working document contained two parts: a report on the two ongoing nomination cycles in 2022 and 2023, and a proposal for the number of files that can be treated in the next two cycles, namely, 2024 and 2025. The working document provides information on the fifty-nine files and sixty files that were treated in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The Secretary wished to outline some of the key trends from these past cycles. After a continuous increase in the number of files until the 2021 cycle, the number of nomination files submitted each year seems to have stabilized at a level around or slightly above 60 files. Sixty files were submitted in 2022, and sixty-seven files were submitted in 2023. The number of States Parties that are treated under priority (0) was also stable or starting to stabilize, with thirty-eight States in the 2022 cycle and forty-four in the 2023 cycle. This meant that all States that had submitted a file could have at least one national file treated over the two-year period. Over the same two-year period, all nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List, nominations from States with no inscribed element and multinational files could be treated under priority (i) and priority (ii). The number of multinational files treated in each of the two cycles remained high (nineteen in the 2022 cycle and thirteen in the 2023 cycle), representing on average one-fourth of the total files included in a cycle. The increasing number of multinational files demonstrated the success of the Convention as a platform for international cooperation among States and communities. However, their increasing number could lead to a situation where States with as few as one element inscribed could no longer be included in a cycle. As it had been observed that in some cases the same States tend to submit multiple multinational files, a prioritization system within multinational files is proposed in the draft decision so as to encourage a wider number of States to have a file treated. Looking ahead to the 2024 and 2025 cycles, the global reflection process on the listing mechanisms will have major implications on these cycles.
3. The **Secretary** presented the main changes made to the Operational Directives. Firstly, the annual ceiling of files to be included in a given cycle was now contained in the Operational Directives and was set at “no more than sixty”. Secondly, the practice of priority (0) applied by successive decisions of the Committee since 2014 is now formally introduced in the Operational Directives (paragraph 34). From the 2024 cycle onwards, the Committee will no longer examine standalone requests for International Assistance, which will all be dealt with by the Bureau. Only requests with nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List, that is, combined requests, will go to the Committee for examination. Several new types of procedure will be treated outside the annual ceiling, including the transfer requests between the Lists, and between the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Register, the follow-up of inscribed elements, and nominations on an extended or reduced basis. The impact of these new procedures on the workload of the Committee, Evaluation Body and the Secretariat will be monitored and reported to the tenth session of the General Assembly in 2024. Taking stock of the new revisions for the 2024 and 2025 cycles, the working document proposed to set at “no more than sixty” the number of files that can be treated for each of the 2024 and 2025 cycles, as stipulated in paragraph 33 of the Operational Directives. It will also ensure that all files under priority (0) are included. Furthermore, it proposed to consider a prioritization system within multinational files, if ever the inclusion of all multinational files under priority (ii) would bring the total number of files for a cycle above sixty. Priority would first be given to files involving at least one State with no national inscribed element, and then to files with the fewest elements inscribed per State concerned. This system will not necessarily occur in every cycle, but given that this situation occurred twice in the past three cycles, it was deemed important to obtain guidance from the Committee on how to deal with such cases. Thirdly, States Parties were encouraged to refrain from submitting several multinational files in the same cycle so as to achieve a better representation of the Lists. The Secretary informed the Committee that the Secretariat was currently finalizing the revision of the existing forms, together with the development of new forms to reflect the changes made in the Operational Directives and the development of new procedures. These revised forms will be used for the first time for the 2024 and 2025 cycles. These forms were for any potential submissions by 31 March 2023 and concern nominations to both Lists (including transfers between the Lists and nominations on an extended or reduced basis). They will also be applied to proposals to the Register and Preparatory Assistance. It was hoped that the simplifications proposed in the forms will facilitate the preparation of files by communities, though their real impact would require at least two years to measure.
4. The **Chairperson** remarked that these important issues had been discussed at length during the work of the Open-ended working group, opening the floor for comments.
5. The delegation of **Germany** thanked the Secretary for the well-thought out report, insisting on the need to inscribe as many multinational nominations as possible, not least because they were fully aligned with the objective of UNESCO with regard to intangible cultural heritage. The Committee should therefore do everything possible to find multinational solutions. The delegation took note of the figure set at sixty. However, it believed that the Committee should not limit itself, especially for really worthwhile nominations. Nevertheless, given the work of the Evaluation Body, it seemed to be an acceptable figure.
6. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Secretariat for its presentation, adding that it fully supported the draft decision. As the document showed, the Committee still faced challenges with regard to the number of files. Although it was in a better position, with the results from the global reflection of the listing mechanism, it was also a fact that the financial and human resources within the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body are limited. In addition to the “no more than sixty” files, the introduction of the new procedures in the Operational Directives will result in an increased workload. The report also clearly highlighted the challenges associated with multinational files. All States Parties must take this into account when submitting new nominations. Sweden thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in presenting an acceptable proposal that allowed for some flexibility and will permit greater equity among submitting States as well as a prioritization system for multinational files. States Parties should therefore consider the present decision and situation with regard to submitting multinational files for upcoming cycles and to show restraint in this regard for the sake of better representation.
7. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for its analysis of the current situation and for its proposal on how to proceed into the next biennium. During this session, the Evaluation Body spoke of the considerable time needed to thoroughly evaluate each nomination, and that any further increase in the annual ceiling would have a negative impact on the quality of the evaluation process. In light of the discussions on the dialogue mechanism, which cannot be used for all the questions identified by the Evaluation Body in the files, for capacity reasons, it was obvious that a further increase would neither be possible or sustainable. It was also noted that the introduction of new procedures in the Operational Directives, such as the expansion or reduction of an element or its transfer, will increase the workload of the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat despite them having reached the limit of their capacities. This was why the delegation supported the draft decision, including the invitation to States submitting more multinational nominations to take into account the current situation so that other States have the possibility of proposing their elements, which would ensure greater representation of submitting States and their intangible cultural heritage.
8. The delegation of **India** appreciated the work of the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body, as well as the report submitted by the Secretariat. Although it found the figure of sixty to be reasonable, it sought greater dialogue and consultations with new Members of the Committee before any changes are made to the Operational Directives. It echoed Germany’s remark that no file that deserves to be on the List should be denied an opportunity because a particular number had been reached. There needs to be some flexibility rather than restrictions placed on Member States. In general, the delegation supported this limit to a large extent because the number around sixty seemed to have stabilized over recent years.
9. The delegation of **Switzerland** remarked that the question of the ceiling on the number of files had already been widely discussed, and that the provision of quality work was related to the capacity of the Evaluation Body. The discussions in this session had demonstrated what the Committee means by quality work with the wish that the Evaluation Body carry out as many ‘dialogues’ as possible within the current framework of the Operational Directives. It would not be a wise decision for the Committee to again change this upper limit of a maximum of sixty nominations recently set. Switzerland therefore supported maintaining this number and instead concentrating on the quality of the evaluations, which is important.
10. The **Chairperson** took note that theCommittee Members did not question the ceiling of sixty, but rather they spoke about flexibility and that it would not be a good thing to have the Committee’s hands tied completely. However, it was obvious that all the Members agreed on the number of sixty.
11. The **Secretary** clarified thatthe number sixty was reached following two years of debates and that it had indeed been adopted by the General Assembly, with the language used in the draft decision precisely reflecting this. With regard to the multinational files, there was an important flexibility in the new system. It is possible now for States and communities to join already existing inscriptions and to extend multinational nominations, which would happen outside the limit of sixty. Thus, the multinational approach to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage had in no way been diminished but rather further encouraged and supported, as joining already existing files was not included in the limit of sixty files per year.
12. The **Chairperson**thanked the Secretary for the clarification, opening the floor to Observers.
13. The delegation of **France**fully understood theconstraintswith regard to multinational nominations, as well as the workload that weighs on the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body, noting that these nominations do not necessarily allow for better geographical representation. The delegation conceded that France had two nominations, with other States having more. However, it could be clearly seen that these multinational nominations had demonstrated a great cooperation mechanism, which was perfectly aligned with the spirit of the Convention, especially when they lead to the establishment of common safeguarding measures. The delegation also called for flexibility to preserve this type of cooperation.
14. The delegation of **Jamaica** underscored the need to stress the importance of capacity-building in all areas of the Convention, which would help States Parties be more precise in the description of elements. It encouraged the Committee to strive for balance between the rules of the Convention and the human elements associated with the submissions by the communities, which could lead to a more balanced geographical distribution of elements.
15. The **Chairperson** turned to the draft decision as a whole. With no objections, **the Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/15) **adopted**.

**ITEM 18 OF THE AGENDA:**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 18, inviting Committee Members to discuss any issues they may have.
2. The delegation of **Senegal** remarked that the Committee was meeting in the context of intangible cultural heritage and yet no time was allocated in the programme to visit any cultural sites during the present session, but also considering Botswana in the next session. It would therefore be interesting for participants in the future to have the opportunity to discover the culture of host countries in future sessions.
3. The **Chairperson**agreed with Senegal and that the days were indeed long with a full programme of work. Nevertheless, participants had the opportunity to discover the city after the sessions, but perhaps a formula could indeed be considered in the future so that there was time for cultural visits and moments of discovery for those visiting the host countries. It would be up to the Secretariat to reflect on this with the Members of the Committee for future sessions, and for Botswana to consider its programme for the upcoming session in 2023.

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION BODY FOR THE 2023 CYCLE**

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 14 and the establishment of the Evaluation Body for the 2023 cycle, informing the Committee that the election for the 2023 cycle was complete. He thanked the two tellers, Ms Soukaina Filali from Morocco and Mr Aneish Rajan from India, for their willingness to serve the Committee.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** recalled that Ms Tiana Lalaina Razafimanantsoa from Madagascar was the only expert nominated from Electoral Group V(a) and was therefore automatically elected. Twenty-four Committee Members were present and voted for Electoral Groups I, II and V(a). There were two invalid ballot papers for Electoral Group V(a). The following candidates received votes as follows. Electoral Group I, seat for one expert: Ms Sophie Elpers from the Netherlands received nine votes; Mr Luis Pablo Martínez-Sanmartín from Spain received two votes; Ms Evrim Ölçer Özünel from Türkiye received thirteen votes and was therefore elected. Electoral Group II, seat for one expert: Ms Ioana Otilia Baskerville from Romania received five votes; Ms Meri Kumbe from Albania received zero votes; Mr Rimvydas Laužikas from Lithuania received nineteen votes and was therefore elected. Electoral Group V(a), seat for one accredited NGO: Amagugu International Heritage Center received seven votes; Global Development for Pygmee Minorities (GLODEPM) received three votes; and the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) received twelve votes and was therefore elected.
3. The **Chairperson** noted the names of the four new members of the Evaluation Body, congratulating them as well as all the other candidates. The Committee had agreed to change the order in which nomination files are examined by the Evaluation Body and the Committee. The box contained the letters from A to Z. Ms Basma Meski from the UNESCO Rabat Office drew a letter from the box.
4. Ms Basma Meskiof the **Secretariat** drew the letter ‘N’.
5. The **Chairperson** confirmed that the Committee would start the examination process in 2023 with files starting with the letter N, continuing in alphabetical order. It was proposed that the same letter be used for the seating arrangements for States Parties non-members of the Committee at its next session, as well as for the seating arrangements for States Parties during the General Assembly. With no further comments, the Chairperson turned to the adoption of the draft decision. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**17.COM 14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/14) **adopted.**

**ITEM 19 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ADOPTION OF THE LIST OF DECISIONS**

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 19 and the adoption of the List of Decisions. According to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee shall adopt its report of this session in the form of a List of Decisions. The Secretariat had compiled the decisions adopted during this week up to the end of Friday, which had been circulated to all Committee Members to allow them to read the decisions. The Chairperson therefore asked that the Committee delegate the responsibility of validating the decisions on the agenda items adopted earlier to the Rapporteur. The Secretariat would incorporate those decisions in the document before its publication online. As per standard practice, the Secretariat may also undertake linguistic corrections. Now was the opportunity to check that the Secretariat had not made any technical errors. With no comments or objections, the Chairperson considered the List of Decisions approved, subject to additions made by the Rapporteur, as well as linguistic revisions made by the Secretariat.

**ITEM 20 OF THE AGENDA:**

**CLOSURE**

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the closure of the session after an intense and extremely productive week, thanking the delegates for their cooperation and strong commitment, working together in a spirit of consensus. He expressed particular gratitude to the Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur, whose support throughout the year greatly contributed to the success of this session. He summarized some of the key achievements of the Committee’s work. There was a total of 1,197 registered participants from 132 different countries. Of the 48 files examined, 4 were inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List and 39 on the Representative List. One International Assistance request was approved, and 4 programmes were included in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The Committee also examined 24 reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, as well as the first regional cycle of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention by States Parties from Europe. A new Evaluation Body for the 2023 cycle was established, including 4 new members (3 experts and 1 NGO). The Chairperson expressed thanks and appreciation to the 2022 Evaluation Body for its work and commitment to safeguarding living heritage and their communities. He expressed gratitude to the performers, technicians and the entire team behind the scenes for the smooth running of this session. The Chairperson thanked the Director-General of UNESCO, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, the Secretary and his entire team for the marvellous job and for their tireless work that made the Committee meeting a rich and interesting experience.
2. The delegation of **Burkina Faso**hadbegun its first intense term on the Committee, sharing moments of positive exchange. It congratulated the Chairperson on his excellent leadership and the brilliant manner in which he had conducted the work, reiterating thanks to the Government of Morocco for its successful hosting, as well as the entire Secretariat and the Culture Sector. Burkina Faso reiterated its congratulations to all the States Parties that had an element inscribed on the Lists and encouraged the other States Parties in the process of inscription to resubmit their nominations. It congratulated Botswana for hosting the next session of the Committee.
3. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Morocco for hosting the session, and the Chairperson in particular for the patience shown as he mastered the difficult times. It thanked the Secretariat and all those who worked in front and behind the scenes, especially the Assistant Director-General and the Secretary for their incredible work, which helped guide the Committee through its decisions.
4. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** spoke about the warmth, openness and beauty of Rabat, as well as the extraordinary preparation, hosting and opening ceremony. It thanked the Secretariat, the Assistant Director-General and the Secretary, adding that the work of intangible cultural heritage ran smoothly thanks to the Secretary’s openness and willingness to reach out to Member States, always offering practical solutions. The delegation thanked the Committee Members and Observers for their lively engagement, which is what the beauty and excitement of intangible cultural heritage means when promoting and safeguarding beautiful manifestations of humanity. It congratulated all the Members States that had their files inscribed, thanking UNESCO and Morocco and all those working behind the scenes. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his pragmatism and humanity, which contributed to the meeting’s success, and congratulated Botswana as future host of the Committee.
5. The delegation of **Brazil** thanked the Secretariat for its detailed reports and all the Member States that strongly support the Convention, especially the recent mechanisms of reflection for creating new balances. It thanked Morocco for hosting and for receiving the delegates with care and hospitality. The delegation congratulated Botswana for its future hosting of the eighteenth session of the Committee, which will be Brazil’s last meeting in the current cycle as a Member of the Committee. Brazil congratulated all the States Parties that had an element inscribed on the Lists and expressed satisfaction in seeing improvements in matters concerning intangible heritage and human rights. Despite its last year in 2023, Brazil will always be open to States Parties to celebrate collaboration and partnerships to help local understanding of intangible heritage with the participation of communities and NGOs for renewed dialogue, thereby contributing to enriching cultural diversity and human creativity.
6. The delegation of **Slovakia** spoke of its historic first meeting as a Member of the Committee, which was full of experiences and emotion. It congratulated the Committee Members for the successful meeting in terms of the conduct of work. The delegation thanked the Chairperson and Vice-Chairs for their perfect mastery in the conduct of sessions, which achieved the approval of the decisions by consensus, taking into account the context, particularly in certain countries and regions, which showed the wisdom of the Committee and further strengthened the credibility of the Convention. It saluted the very high-level work of the Evaluation Body, which should remain the supreme guide to the Committee’s deliberations. The delegation also expressed gratitude to the Secretariat, the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and his team, and all the organizers, technicians and interpreters for the meeting’s great success. It saluted Botswana, thanking it for its proposal to host the next session. It thanked the Chairperson for the delegation’s discovery of Rabat and the Medina, where it found the real history, traditions and authentic atmosphere of this city and country. It noted in particular the great respect, kindness and solidarity that reigned throughout the city from fellow citizens.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked Slovakia for its heartfelt words, remarking that everyone did indeed have the opportunity to experience the kindness and hospitality of Morocco, a trait of its culture. Whether in wealthy or more popular neighbourhoods, the spirit is the same, the heart is the same, the approach to others is the same, with an openness to others, for which he was very proud, and which is part of the Moroccan identity.
8. The delegation of **Bangladesh** spoke of the privilege to have been in Rabat to enjoy the warmth of the people of Morocco, thanking them for their extraordinary hospitality, as well as the kindness of all the ministers and her Royal Highness, who the Committee Members had the pleasure to meet. It aligned with the remarks made by Slovakia regarding the warm feelings of the experience and enjoyment of Rabat. The delegation thanked the Government and people of Morocco for the impeccable arrangements and to all those who worked night and day to make this meeting a great success. It thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and the entire Secretariat who worked relentlessly to produce and prepare the documents and meeting. Indeed, this was among the top international meetings it had ever attended. As a first-time Committee Member, it had been a learning experience. The delegation noted the difficult work of the Evaluation Body, thanking the experts for their due diligence. It also noted room for improvement in the Committee’s working methods and it remained committed to contributing to improving these areas. The delegation looked forward to Botswana, congratulating the future Chairperson and the country. It concluded by thanking the Chairperson for his stellar and steadfast leadership, and his calm in the face of challenging situations and overwhelming emotions, which made this meeting a success.
9. The **Chairperson** agreed that this session had been very emotional and thanked Bangladesh and all the delegates.
10. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** agreed with everything that had been said, remarking on the overwhelming emotions for its first time serving as a Committee Member. It congratulated the Chairperson for his effective and perfect chairing of the meeting and leadership, noting in particular the hospitality received in Rabat. The delegation congratulated the Secretariat, the Secretary and the Assistant Director-General for the forty-seven new elements inscribed on the Lists, forever linked to Rabat by the communities and States, which will always recall the hospitality of this great country. It was sure that the 122 countries represented would return to their countries and spread the word about this wonderful meeting. It wished the newly elected Evaluation Body success in the next cycle, as well as Botswana.
11. The **Chairperson** thanked Uzbekistan for its kind words, adding that he was very thankful and grateful to have worked with everyone gathered together under this amazing spirit, which was an honour for him and for Morocco. This session will be a turning point in the Convention and the session in Botswana will be equally incredible.
12. The delegation of **Republic of Korea** thanked the Chairperson and the Secretariat for the competent and excellent preparation of this meeting, which led to its success. It especially thanked Morocco for the warmest and most graceful hospitality, which is an element of intangible cultural heritage in itself. There were several moving moments throughout the meeting, which confirmed the solidarity among humanity. The Republic of Korea was extremely happy to know that the Convention is relevant, strong and still growing.
13. The **Chairperson** congratulated the team of the Republic of Korea and the other teams of the Committee Members of Brazil, Morocco, Switzerland and all the others.
14. The delegation of **Malaysia** remarked on the interesting, colourful and delightful experience, which will leave beautiful memories of this amazing culture. As a first-time Member of the Committee, it truly believed that the exchanges and views shared throughout the week signified that, although some decisions were made with great deliberation and challenges, they were made in good faith in the spirit of the Convention. Indeed, it was a very good learning experience. Malaysia congratulated all the States Parties that had successfully inscribed their elements, as well as the newly elected Evaluation Body members. It thanked all the Committee Members for their inspiring contributions and input in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation. The delegation remarked on the Chairperson’s wisdom, warmth and remarkable manner and thorough preparation that had successfully steered the meeting in the true spirit of Moroccan hospitality and culture. Malaysia expressed its deepest appreciation to the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and the entire Secretariat, the Evaluation Body, the interpreters, and everyone behind the scenes who had worked tirelessly throughout the year, as well as in preparing for the General Assembly. This meeting would not have been possible without the immense contribution of the Evaluation Body. Malaysia shared a phrase of Pantun [in Malay], its joint nomination with Indonesia inscribed on the Representative List in 2020, to wish to meet again in Botswana, wishing Botswana every success in hosting the next session.
15. The delegation of **Paraguay** echoed the words of thanks and, as it was its first experience on the Committee, held the grace of the meeting in its heart. It quoted in Guaraní that it was grateful to the noble country of Morocco for hosting the Committee and for allowing the delegates to experience Rabat. The delegation thanked the entire Organization, the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and all those who worked on this meeting and provided a genuine festival of intangible cultural heritage, the passion and commitment of which was felt and experienced over the past few days. The delegation remarked on the generosity of knowledge and patience shown by the Chairperson in the way he chaired the proceedings, for which it was extremely grateful. It was amazed by the beauty of Rabat and its people, who had welcomed the delegates with so much hospitality and kindness. The delegations would leave with hearts full of happiness after this incredible, unforgettable experience.
16. The **Chairperson** thanked Paraguay for the emotional, touching and unforgettable moment expressed the day before.
17. The delegation of **Panama** spoke of its first in-person session as a Member of the Committee, experienced in Rabat among the warmth of its people and where it was able to defend and represent the world’s living heritage. Morocco gave the Committee this opportunity, and the delegation thanked all those who made this experience possible, from the people working behind the scenes, the Secretariat for its support throughout the process, and all the members of the Bureau working in the true spirit of consensus, working as one. The delegation also thanked the Members of the Committee and the Observers. During the Committee’s debates, the Members always had the communities and their living culture in mind, which was the most important thing. It thanked the Chairperson for his excellent chairing, which enabled the smooth running of the session. The delegation also thanked the experts for instigating the interesting debates and for their recommendations that will be taken into account in the future. It also witnessed the importance of the periodic reporting as an opportunity for reflection and to see the direction the Convention was heading in for the future. The delegation congratulated all the countries for the inscriptions of their different elements at this session, wishing Botswana well for the next session.
18. The **Chairperson** thanked Panama, Paraguay and all the delegations for the excellent work done and their spirit of cooperation.
19. The delegation of **Peru** echoed thanks to Morocco, a country full of culture and diversity, for its hospitality and welcome, and for the warmth of its people. It congratulated the Chairperson for his impeccable chairing, whose leadership had truly enabled the Committee to achieve the meeting’s objectives. The delegation congratulated the UNESCO team, the Secretariat, the Members of the Committee and everyone who took part in this meeting. It congratulated all the States and communities who were able to inscribe their elements on the Lists of the Convention. The delegation was delighted that Botswana will host the next Committee session, wishing Botswana well. It thanked Spain for supporting the Spanish-speaking States to speak in their own language, thanking the interpreters for their great work.
20. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** expressed satisfaction with the balanced and calm way in which the Chairperson conducted the Committee’s work, congratulating the Evaluation Body for its meticulous and methodical analysis of the files. Indeed, this work had made it possible not only to highlight encouraging aspects in the safeguarding efforts carried out in States Parties, but also to focus on the recurring shortcomings in the files submitted in this cycle. In this regard, Côte d’Ivoire believed that a new reflection is necessary to provide clarifications to the dialogue mechanism in order to improve the fluidity, objectivity and understanding of the files. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its tireless, colossal and well-organized work. It was also grateful to Morocco for its hospitality and for the beautiful opening ceremony. The delegation recalled the emotional debate relating to agenda item 8.a, but was grateful for the best possible reaction from the State Party concerned, congratulating Belgium for its collaborative spirit, which contributed to maintaining cohesion within the Committee.
21. The delegation of **Czechia** subscribed to all that had been said in the interventions, adding its voice to the thanks addressed to Morocco and the Chairperson for his gestures of kindness. It thanked the Secretary and his entire team, who had worked very hard, and the Evaluation Body for the preparation of the excellent files. The delegation thanked the interpreters and everyone who greeted the delegates, always with a smile. It was grateful to meet face-to-face after two years of virtual sessions, and to experience the hospitality of Morocco. The delegation thanked everyone who contributed to the success of the meeting, as it looked forward to meeting again in Botswana, thanking Botswana for hosting.
22. The delegation of **India** recalled [in his personal capacity] the first time the Chairperson had invited him for dinner at his house in Paris. He mentioned that he was vegetarian, but instead of saying ‘so what do you eat?’, he presented a large spread of vegetarian Moroccan food and Moroccan hospitality. It was an unforgettable experience, which was extended even further in Morocco in his first time in the country, thanking the Chairperson for his friendship and warmth. UNESCO is one of the most beautiful organizations in the United Nations family, whose genuine warmth and hospitality among ambassadors is incomparable. The delegation thanked the Chairperson and the Government of Morocco for the wonderful gestures extended to the Committee Members. It thanked the Secretariat for its efficiency, and the Secretary for his energy, always available to give advice. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its excellent work, expressing gratitude despite some divergent decisions. It was also grateful to the wonderful intangible cultural heritage elements brought before the Committee, and although one of the elements had been removed, it hoped that it was only temporary and would welcome it back as well. The delegation concluded by remarking on the wonderful experience of camaraderie, fraternity and universal brotherhood typical of the United Nations.
23. The **Chairperson** thanked India for expressing the true spirit of this Convention, noting that the Ambassador had been joined by his young son.
24. The delegation of **India** explained that he [in his personal capacity] was also a babysitter as his wife was so enamoured with Rabat, hence, this was gender equality!
25. The **Chairperson** recalled the interesting discussions with the Ambassador of India on life, the spirit world and religion, adding that the UNESCO family was blessed to have him.
26. The delegation of **Angola**congratulated the Chairperson on his conduct of the work, on his wisdom and for guiding the Committee through the most difficult times. It thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretary for their dedication to the Convention, as well as the Secretariat for its immense work. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its sense of responsibility in its mission in the evaluation of the files. It thanked the Government of Morocco for its hospitality. It was Angola’s first experience as a Member of the Committee, a very enriching experience and a celebration of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation congratulated Botswana on its election and hosting of the next session.
27. The delegation of **Mauritania** expressed profound thanks to Morocco for the organization of this important meeting. Indeed, Morocco should be given the International Cup of Intangible Cultural Heritage before the World Cup in Qatar! Rabat is not only a capital of culture of the Islamic world, it is also a capital of sport, a capital of heritage without borders and a capital of poets. The delegates will leave Morocco with feelings of peace, security and tranquillity. The Chairperson is one of Morocco’s best ambassadors, a dean of diplomacy. The delegation recalled his tears in the face of difficulties that threatened the values of the world today, especially on the African continent. It is a symbol of Moroccan diplomacy.
28. The **Chairperson** responded that the representative of Mauritania is also a great poet, the Arab Group was pleased to have him, always calming the situation with his poems. The Chairperson thanked him for his friendship, as well as all of Mauritania.
29. The delegation of **Rwanda**remarked that this was the last day of emotion when everything had been said. It thanked the Committee and everyone present for the unforgettable week and for the excellent organization of the sessions, rich in exchanges and based on a spirit of consensus. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his leadership and wisdom, which led to the meeting’s success. It also thanked the Secretary and his team, as well as the Assistant Director-General, for their remarkable work throughout the week. The delegation looked forward to the next session in the beautiful city of Gaborone, Botswana, with its wonderful hospitality, adding that it hoped to welcome the Committee one day in Kigali.
30. The delegation of **Ethiopia** recalled that the last session organized by Morocco and the Secretariat took place online, recalling the excellent information that was shared. It congratulated Morocco for the two wonderful and historic events this week: the hosting of this session, and Morocco moving to the second round of the World Cup! The delegation thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of the meeting, after two consecutive meetings online, as well as everyone who helped facilitate this session, especially the Members of the Bureau and the Evaluation Body. It also thanked the agencies responsible for the logistics, hotel, security, as well as the performing arts groups and event organizers. The delegation concluded by wishing Botswana well in the next session in 2023.
31. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked Morocco and the Chairperson for his chairing, and for his warm and welcoming generosity shown to all during this meeting. It thanked the hospitality staff, chauffeurs and interpreters for their professionalism and patience. Profound appreciation went to the Secretariat, the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and Ms Fumiko Ohinata and their team who always provide well-written documentation, answers to all the questions and very good advice. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body and the ICH NGO Forum for sharing their knowledge and expertise. It looked forward to 2023 and the reflection process on Article 18, and to the next Committee meeting in Botswana.
32. The delegation of **Viet Nam** joined previous colleagues in commending the Chairperson for his excellent leadership and wisdom, thanking Morocco for the warm hospitality and excellent organization. It was truly touched by the warmth and wholehearted friendship of the Moroccan people, and happy to have had the opportunity to immerse itself in the diversity of Morocco’s unique culture and beauty. The delegation expressed sincere thanks to the Committee Members for their hard work and to the Evaluation Body for their great contribution, and strongly commended the Director-General, the Assistant Director-General, the Secretariat, and especially the Secretary, for their thorough preparations and professionalism, which led to the meeting’s huge success. It congratulated the new elements inscribed in this session, which really showed that intangible cultural heritage is not only a vital source of cultural diversity, creativity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, but also a driver for sustainable development and resilience. The delegation looked forward to meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, thanking the Ambassador, H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, for hosting the next session, which will be another milestone in efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage when the Convention celebrates its twentieth anniversary.
33. The delegation of **Switzerland** commented on the remarkable eloquence with which colleagues had expressed their thanks, adding that the Chairperson had made the delegations feel like part of his family. The delegations were welcomed every day with warmth, as he guided the Committee with such professionalism. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for the exceptional welcome in this great country, which harbours enormous cultural wealth. It expressed heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who were there to guide the delegates, the ever-smiling security officers, the drivers and all the staff. The delegation highlighted the extreme professionalism of the Secretariat, which allowed the Committee to work in full confidence knowing that everything had been done, tirelessly, to facilitate its work and decisions. Thanks were expressed to the Secretary and his entire team, as well as to the members of the Evaluation Body for their presence and availability to dialogue, which is exemplary within the framework of the various Conventions.
34. The delegation of **Morocco** was very moved to hear the positive and heart-warming testimonies of the delegations present. It was satisfied and proud of all the work accomplished that led to the success of this session, which was rich in emotions, important decisions and positive and collective energy. The delegation thanked the various Moroccan authorities and everyone who participated in the excellent and smooth organization of this session. It greatly thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary and all his team for their remarkable and tireless efforts, their commitment and availability. The delegation thanked the interpreters for their work and patience, as well as all the States Parties and delegates who travelled to Rabat to join the meeting. It congratulated the Chairperson for the wise and efficient way in which he conducted the work, marked by such a heavy schedule, adding that Morocco looked forward to 2023 in Botswana.
35. The delegation of **Botswana** spoke about Pula! A word that delegates will hear many times in Botswana. Pula is very important to Botswanians. It is life. Botswana is a dry country and Pula means rain. It means peace and all the good things you can wish for someone. The Chairperson’s shoes will be difficult to fill, so royally had the delegations been treated by the people of this beautiful country. The delegation thanked the Government and people of Morocco for their warm and generous hospitality. It thanked the Evaluation Body for guiding the Committee in its work, despite the difficult times, as well as the Secretariat, the interpreters, the security officers, and the teamakers who always had a smile. The delegation thanked everyone who contributed to this wonderful experience in this unforgettable country, wishing the national team well in the next round of the World Cup, as it also flew the flag for Africa. The delegation was grateful to the Committee for honouring Botswana as host of the next session. Botswana’s wildlife will keep the delegates occupied in place of the football, and the country will welcome them with open arms for an equally memorable experience. *Pula*!
36. Thanking Botswana, the **Chairperson** was convinced that the eighteenth Committee session will be a memorable occasion. A great country and wonderful people await the Committee, magnificently represented by the future Chairperson, H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad. The Chairperson wished him well, adding that he could count on him to work towards the success of the next session. It was a pleasure and an honour to have hosted the Minister, Mr Tumiso Rakgare, and the entire Botswana team, and he thanked H.E. Mr Moorad for his exceptional spirit, fraternity, openness and friendship. On behalf of His Majesty the King, Mohammed VI, and the Government of Morocco, the Chairperson thanked all the delegates for their hard work, adding that everything they saw, this spirit, vision and ambition that can be seen in Rabat, and over the last 20–25 years, was possible thanks to the clear vision and ambition of the magnificent King for this country and which had led the country to where it is today. Morocco is a middle-income country, but one that is emerging. It does not have gas or oil, but it has an ambition and a vision, and a people committed to their King. This is behind the success of the Moroccan model, and what makes Moroccans proud.
37. The **Chairperson** was very happy to have received the delegates on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Government, congratulating the Director of Cultural Action, whose work contributed to the success of this event. He thanked Avant Scène, the Ministry of Culture, for its marvellous work, in particular, the Minister, H.E. Mr Mohammed Mehdi Bensaid, who was strongly committed to the success of this event. The Chairperson thanked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Nasser Bourita, for his incredible support in the organization of this event, making the necessary contacts to facilitate the task. He thanked the ministers once again, along with everyone who had worked directly or indirectly to make this event a success, the Secretariat and all the teams for their exceptional work, and the Members of the Committee. It had been a pleasure and an honour to work by their side. The Chairperson closed the seventeenth session of the Committee of Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

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

1. See the calendar of events of the seventeenth session [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/calendar-of-events-01278). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Consult the latest edition in multiple languages [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/basic-texts-00503). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Consult all the nomination forms [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ###  Concerning ‘Programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage’.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Consult the dedicated website for periodic reporting [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/periodic-reporting-00460). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. See the global network of facilitators [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region: <https://www.unesco-ichcap.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Read more about the MOOC [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/massive-online-open-course-mooc-01228). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Read more about the 1974 Recommendation [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/education/1974recommendation#:~:text=The%201974%20Recommendation%20calls%20on,Human%20Rights%20(Article%2026).). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Read more about European Heritage Days [here](https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Read the MONDIACULT Declaration [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/mondiacult-2022-states-adopt-historic-declaration-culture). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Read more about the Livind project [here](https://www.aineetonkulttuuriperinto.fi/en/livind). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Read more about UNESCO Culture 2030 Indicators in Serbia [here](https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1192/). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Read more about the Decade [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/decades/indigenous-languages#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20General%20Assembly,stakeholders%20and%20resources%20for%20their). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization: <http://www.alecso.org/nsite/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: <https://www.icesco.org/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. See the list of forms to be used for nominations [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. A category 2 centre based in Sofia, Bulgaria: <https://www.unesco-centerbg.org/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Africa: <https://crespiaf.org/en/crespiaf-4/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America, a category 2 centre: <https://crespial.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Read more about the Toolkit and download it [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/requesting-assistance-00039). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Arab League of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization: <http://www.alecso.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa (CRESPIAF) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Read more about Priority Africa 2022–2029 [here](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000382928/PDF/382928eng.pdf.multi). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. See full statement made by the Chairperson of the Evaluation Body [here](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/61947-EN.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Read more about the Global Forum [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/forum-against-racism-discrimination). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. ICHNGO Forum: <https://www.ichngoforum.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Read more about the composition of the Executive Board [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/executive-board/). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Read more about the prize [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/news/laura-lopez-is-the-first-winner-of-the-albert-van-der-zeiden-prize/). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Read more about web dossier on ICH and sustainable tourism [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/web-dossier-on-intangible-cultural-heritage-and-sustainable-tourism/). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Read more about the initiative [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/news/living-heritage-peace-social-media-initiative/). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Consult the Living Heritage Series [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/heritage-alive/). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America: <https://crespial.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Criterion P.9: The programme, project or activity is primarily applicable to the particular needs of developing countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Recommendation 6: The Living Heritage Entity should strengthen the quality of project design, monitoring and outcomes reporting to be guided by the Overall Results Framework. Specific attention should furthermore be given to community engagement, sustainable development and gender equality, among other areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. International Centre for Information and Networking on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asia-Pacific, a category 2 centre. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)