**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**

**5 to 9 December 2023**

**Item 6 of the provisional agenda:**

**Twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention in 2023**

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| **Summary**  The year 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention. The present document reports on the main activities and events undertaken to celebrate this anniversary.  **Decision required:** paragraph 15 |

**Introduction**

1. The year 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, adopted by the thirty-second session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 17 October 2003. In twenty years of implementation, the Convention has significantly broadened the concept of cultural heritage and has achieved one of its major objectives: to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, increasing its visibility at all levels and placing communities at the heart of safeguarding. Moreover, while twenty years ago only a handful of countries had integrated living heritage into their policies, today the Convention has become a key reference in setting up institutions and implementing public policies and laws, as evidenced through periodic reports. Despite being one of the youngest UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture, it has seen an exceptionally rapid rate of ratification, with 181 States Parties to date, and is close to reaching universality.
2. The celebration provided an important opportunity for stakeholders to: (a) take stock of the impacts of the Convention over the past twenty years, (b) enhance public awareness on the importance of safeguarding living heritage, and (c) reflect on the future directions that the Convention should take in the upcoming decades. The present document reports on the main activities and events undertaken to celebrate this anniversary.
3. **Global campaign**
4. The twentieth-anniversary campaign was organized under an umbrella slogan ‘We are #LivingHeritage’, accompanied by a theme video bearing the same title. A [dedicated webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/anniversary) was established to provide information on key anniversary events. The webpage featured a comprehensive timeline of the Convention, detailing the significant milestones in the Convention’s history. The webpage also hosted a [social media template pack](https://trello.com/b/HVCYR3Rj/ich-20th-anniversary-2023) that could be downloaded directly by stakeholders from the website.

Une image contenant texte, capture d’écran, personne

Description générée automatiquement

[*Link to the anniversary video*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/download.php?versionID=69821)

Social media initiatives

1. UNESCO conducted a social media campaign throughout the year to support the anniversary celebrations. In particular, the campaign showcased selected safeguarding experiences and intangible cultural heritage elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention. The ‘Share your voice!’ initiative, for example, encouraged the active participation of bearers and practitioners under the slogan #SharingHumanity, while many campaign messages carried the generic slogan #LivingHeritage. At the time of publishing this report, the key metrics include: 197 posts, 6,675,818 people reached (36% aged 18-24 years and 45% aged 25-34 years based on socio-demographic data collected between March and June 2023) and 6,399,625 cumulative video views. Instagram emerged as the best-performing platform, delivering both the highest audience reach and engagement. By focusing on visual storytelling and strategically using language hashtags, content was tailored and adapted to the respective language accounts.

Une image contenant habits, personne, plein air, Danse

Description générée automatiquement Une image contenant Visage humain, habits, personne, texte

Description générée automatiquement Une image contenant habits, texte, personne, affiche

Description générée automatiquement  Une image contenant ciel, plein air, Danse, danseur

Description générée automatiquement 

Activities around the world

1. In line with the encouragements given by the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022 (Resolution [9.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/13)), stakeholders of the Convention around the world undertook a series of events to celebrate the anniversary. These celebrations were showcased through the above-mentioned dedicated webpage of the Convention. A twentieth-anniversary logo, incorporating the text ‘in support of the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention’, was made available and adapted in requested languages to support these initiatives.
   1. A total of 122 events were featured on the webpage at the time of publishing this report, distributed by region as follows: Electoral Group I: 52 items; Electoral Group II: 40 items; Electoral Group III: 4 items; Electoral Group IV: 17 items; Electoral Group V(a): 2 items; Electoral Group V(b): 4 items; multi-regional: 3 items.
   2. The majority of organized events were conferences (27%) and festivals (21%), followed by exhibitions (8%) and workshops (6%), and other types of activities (35%), such as the launch of publications (3%).
   3. A significant 44% of events were organized by public institutions, such as ministries of culture, national cultural centres, or other types of national or regional institutions. At the same time, the involvement of universities or other learning institutions (5%) and non-governmental organizations (25%) was also noteworthy.
2. **Events and activities at UNESCO**
3. A series of events were organized at UNESCO Headquarters with intangible cultural heritage as the central theme and with reference to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention:

* On the International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2023, UNESCO Headquarters hosted an event with Sadhguru, a globally renowned yoga practitioner and instructor to promote the element ‘Yoga’, inscribed in 2016 on the Representative List. The event was organized by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, the Ministry of Ayush and UNESCO.
* The 2023 edition of the European Heritage Days, held on 16 and 17 September 2023, was organized around the theme of ‘Living Heritage and Sport Heritage’. The event provided an opportunity for UNESCO to showcase the diversity of living heritage through a variety of activities, including performances, workshops, encounters with bearers, documentary broadcasts, and an expert meeting where the public could engage in discussions on the theme. Additionally, a dedicated UNESCO Campus gathered experts and young students to exchange on issues related to the 2003 Convention.
* The overall theme of the Latin America and the Caribbean week (19 to 23 June 2023) was ‘20 years of the 2003 Convention, Living Heritage, Youth and Small Island Developing States’. The event, known as ‘LAC week’, included a conference on the 2003 Convention and sustainable development in the region, the third edition of the Latin America and Caribbean Film Festival (SALC 2023), and the launch of a youth comic.

1. UNESCO partnered with La Poste (the French post office) to design and launch the ‘20 years… Let’s celebrate living heritage’ stamp. This stamp featured the element ‘Zaouli, popular music and dance of the Guro communities in Côte d’Ivoire’, which was inscribed in 2017 on the Representative List. The stamp was officially released in September 2023 for use in France.
2. Moreover, a photography exhibition is scheduled to be showcased along the fences of UNESCO Headquarters during the months of November and December 2023, aligning with the 42nd session of the General Conference. In response to a call for submissions, 59 States contributed photographs to be featured in the exhibition.
3. UNESCO organized from 27 to 29 November 2023 the ‘[Naples Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century’](https://www.unesco.org/en/culture/naples-conference). Hosted by Italy, in Naples, the Conference was organized in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, as well as the Italian Ministry of Culture, with the support of the City of Naples. The main objective of this meeting was to a) celebrate heritage in its diverse forms, b) foster new forms of safeguarding that enhance a community-based approach, including the broadest participation of communities in the decision making and respecting rights of communities, and to c) highlight the potential of heritage as a driver of sustainable development, peace and stability. The Conference gathered a diverse array of cultural stakeholders including experts, practitioners, site managers and community leaders and States Parties. Their perspectives inspired a holistic approach to heritage that considers the close relationships between nature and culture, tangible and intangible. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the lessons learnt from the reflections on the occasions of the 50th and 20th anniversaries of the 1972 and 2003 UNESCO Conventions respectively, and adopted the call for action: ‘[The Spirit of Naples](https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/11/UNESCO_CALL_FOR_ACTION_NAPLES.pdf)’, setting out eleven principles for a prospective vision on safeguarding policies and programmes.
4. The celebratory momentum in 2023 led to the exploration and initiation of several other initiatives. These included, for instance, three initiatives related to book publications and a map focused on living heritage safeguarding. Even though these projects were not fully completed within the anniversary year, they will be continued and carried forward into 2024.
5. **Global event**
6. As a landmark event, a Global meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on 25 and 26 July 2023, to celebrate the anniversary of the Convention under the theme ‘Unleashing the power of living heritage for sustainable development and peace’. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea (MOFA), the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea (CHA), in collaboration with UNESCO, the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), and the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation (CHF).
7. As an outcome document, the [Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/61291-EN.pdf) takes stock of twenty years of implementation of the Convention and provides directions for its future implementation. Leading thinkers, policymakers, civil society actors, experts and community representatives from across the world discussed urgent global challenges and the extraordinary power of living heritage to respond to them. Articulated around four thematic panels, the event explored how – every day and in every region around the world – living heritage improves livelihoods, creates a more harmonious relationship with nature and the planet, strengthens transformative, quality education, and promotes diversity and dialogue in the digital environment.

**Going forward**

1. As highlighted in this report and through the Convention’s dedicated webpage for the twentieth anniversary, the events and activities held around the world during 2023 reflected the engagement and enthusiasm of stakeholders in pursuing the Convention’s overall goal – to raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage. The anniversary year allowed those involved to promote the objectives of the Convention, take stock of past achievements and explore the Convention’s future development. The social media campaign demonstrated the potential use of technology for safeguarding, as well as for reaching out to previously untapped audiences, such as youth.
2. The networks formed around the Convention that make up the ‘living heritage family’ stand out as a major achievement of the past twenty years, as highlighted during the anniversary year. Going forward, the continued implementation of the Convention will benefit from the support and cooperation of these stakeholders around the world, as they work together towards realizing the future directions explored during the anniversary year, as outlined in the Seoul Vision statement.
3. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 18.COM 6

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/23/18.COM/6 Rev.,
2. Recalling Resolution [9.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/13),
3. Commends the activities undertaken in all Electoral Groups, at national, regional and international levels, in the context of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, including conferences, festivals; expert meetings, exhibitions, publications, awareness-raising campaigns, amongst others;
4. Expresses its gratitude to the Republic of Korea for hosting the Global meeting for the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention in Seoul and welcomes the areas for future action highlighted in the ‘Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace’;
5. Also expresses its gratitude to Italy for hosting the Naples Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century, and further welcomes the resulting Call for Action, which sets out eleven major principles to ensure a prospective vision for the safeguarding of heritage;
6. Further expresses its gratitude to States Parties from Latin American and Caribbean for the regional initiatives reflecting on achievements and future developments of the Convention, including a conference held at UNESCO Headquarters, a meeting of experts organized in Peru in cooperation with the category 2 centre CRESPIAL, and the launch of a publication, compiling the results of the regional reflection;
7. Expresses its appreciation to all States Parties, communities and other stakeholders for their active participation in the celebration throughout the year in promoting the objectives of the Convention, taking stock of past achievements and exploring the Convention’s future development.