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

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

**Meeting of the Bureau**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room VIII**

**4 June 2024**

**10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Item 4 of the provisional agenda:**

**Examination of requests for preparatory assistance  
for nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List**

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| **Summary**  With reference to paragraphs 9 and 21 of the Operational Directives of the Convention, this document presents two preparatory assistance requests for the elaboration of nomination files to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. The Bureau is asked to examine these requests for preparatory assistance in line with paragraph 49 of the Operational Directives.  **Decision required:** paragraph 6 |

1. With reference to Article 21 of the Convention, paragraphs 9 and 21 of the Operational Directives provide for preparatory assistance to be made available to States Parties wishing to prepare nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereafter ‘the Urgent Safeguarding List’) or proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. In addition, paragraph 49 of the Operational Directives provides that requests for International Assistance up to US$100,000, including preparatory assistance, be examined and approved by the Bureau of the Committee.
2. As specified in the Operational Directives, requests for preparatory assistance shall be submitted by 31 March each year (paragraph 47) for examination by the Bureau of the Committee (paragraph 49). In terms of the budget, preparatory assistance will normally be in the range of US$5,000 to US$10,000. Following the amendments to the Operational Directives made by the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022, requests for all types of preparatory assistance shall be submitted by using [Form ICH-05](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ICH-05-2024-EN.doc) (paragraph 22).
3. **Overview of the present requests**
4. The Bureau is asked to examine and decide on the following two completed preparatory assistance requests for the elaboration of nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List:

| **Draft Decision** | **Requesting State** | **Title** | **Amount requested** | **File No.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [19.COM 2.BUR 4.1](#Decision1) | Papua New Guinea | Social practices and cultural elements of Toare Gulf mask festival | US$10,000 | 02212 |
| [19.COM 2.BUR 4.2](#Decision2) | Uganda | Imbalu ceremonies | US$7,970 | 02251 |

1. In conformity with paragraph 48 of the Operational Directives, the Secretariat assessed the completeness of the requests and informed the submitting States of their possible examination dates. The Secretariat shall communicate the decision of the Bureau to the requesting States within two weeks of the decision. The requests in question are available online for the Bureau’s consultation at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/demandes-d-assistance-preparatoire-19com-2bur-01351>.
2. Currently Papua New Guinea has no elements inscribed on the Lists of the 2003 Convention, while Uganda has five elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List and one element inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
3. **Draft decisions**
4. The Bureau of the nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to adopt the following decisions:

**DRAFT DECISION 19.COM 2.BUR 4.1** [Retour au début](#Overview)

The Bureau,

1. Recalling Article 23 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives relating to the eligibility and criteria of International Assistance requests,
2. Having examined document LHE/24/19.COM 2.BUR/4 and the request for preparatory assistance no. 02212 submitted by Papua New Guinea,
3. Takes note that Papua New Guinea has requested International Assistance in the amount of US$10,000 to prepare a nomination of **Social practices and cultural elements of Toare Gulf mask festival** to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

To be implemented by the Papua New Guinea National Cultural Commission, this nine-month project is aimed at preparing a nomination file to the Urgent Safeguarding List for the social practices and rituals related to the Toare mask festival. The Toare community has a population of around six to seven hundred people and is located in the Uamai villages. An annual celebration and a means of asking ancestral spirits for blessings, protection and bountiful harvests, the festival involves specific rituals, songs, dance performances and a procession. The masks are created using natural materials, and the colours, styles and shapes used have spiritual meanings and connotations. The festival and the related knowledge and practices are at risk of disappearing due to religious and educational influences that portray the practice as evil. This project will support, among others, awareness-raising activities on intangible cultural heritage among local authorities and bearer communities and ensure their involvement in the preparation of the nomination file to the Urgent Safeguarding List.

1. Decides that, from the information provided in file no. 02212, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance given in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

**Criterion A.1:** The request clearly indicates that the Toare community members will be broadly involved in the preparation of the nomination, as will the traditional leaders, and provincial and local officials. Community representatives will also be part of the exercise to document the social and cultural practices related to the element and will be involved in the construction of a cultural centre.

**Criterion A.2:** The amount requested by the State Party seems appropriate in relation to the proposed activities for the preparation of the nomination file to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

**Criterion A.3:** The preparatory assistance will be used to organize two awareness-raising meetings on the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The first meeting will involve provincial and local government authorities, while the second one will target community members, bearers and practitioners to obtain their free, prior and informed consent for the initiative. In addition, the project will contribute to the collection of information (film and photographs) to be submitted as part of the nomination file. The construction of a cultural centre is also planned and traditional materials will be used to store and safekeep the related cultural objects, such as masks.

**Criterion A.4:** The requesting State Party is committed to submitting a nomination for the possible inscription of the element on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. The submission is expected before 31 March 2025 for possible inscription by the Committee at its twenty-first session, provided that the nomination can be included in the 2026 cycle, in application of the annual ceiling for the number of nominations and the priority system in force at the time of the submission.

**Criterion A.5:** The requesting State Party will contribute 34 per cent (US$5,138) of the total amount of the project for preparatory assistance. Consequently, International Assistance is requested from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the remaining 66 per cent of the total amount of the project.

**Criterion A.6:** It is expected that the capacities of the community members will be reinforced through their involvement in the documentation of the element. In addition, the two meetings foreseen as part of the project will contribute to the discussion and definition of the safeguarding measures for the element, thus increasing its viability.

**Criterion A.7:** The requesting State Party has not previously received any financial assistance from UNESCO under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund of the 2003 Convention to implement activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

1. Approves the request for preparatory assistance from Papua New Guinea for the preparation of the nomination for the **Social practices and cultural elements of Toare Gulf mask festival** in view of the submission of the nomination for possible inscription of the element on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and grants the amount of US$10,000 to the requesting State Party to this end;
2. Encourages the requesting State Party to strengthen the capacity of the communities concerned to safeguard the practice in question by explaining the mechanisms of the 2003 Convention and its purpose during the consultations;
3. Requests that the Secretariat reach an agreement with the requesting State Party on the technical details of the assistance, paying particular attention to ensuring that the budget and the work plan of the activities to be covered by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund are detailed and specific enough to provide a sufficient justification of all the expenditures;
4. Invites the requesting State Party to use Form ICH-05-Report to report on the use of the assistance granted.

**DRAFT DECISION 19.COM 2.BUR 4.2** [Retour au début](#Overview)

The Bureau,

1. Recalling Article 23 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives relating to the eligibility and criteria of International Assistance requests,
2. Having examined document LHE/24/19.COM 2.BUR/4 and the request for preparatory assistance no. 02251 submitted by Uganda,
3. Takes note that Uganda has requested International Assistance in the amount of US$7,970 to prepare a nomination of **Imbalu ceremonies** to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

To be implemented by the Inzu Ya Masaaba/Institution of the Umukuuka, this three-month project is aimed at preparing a nomination file to the Urgent Safeguarding List for the Imbalu Ceremonies in Uganda. The ceremonies are a rite of passage for young men that involve many activities, from cultural education, to running, dancing and beer brewing. They culminate with the circumcision of initiates, accompanied by rites such as the smearing of millet paste on their bodies and a dance performance to welcome them back into the community. The ceremonies are observed by the Bamasaaba communities in eastern and western Uganda. The Imbalu ceremonies are at risk of disappearing due to a marked decrease in traditional circumcision pathways and changes such as wildlife protection laws that affect certain elements of the ceremonies. Environmental challenges, including a drop in millet and sorghum production, are also impacting the ceremonies. This project will support the preparation of the nomination file for the Imbalu ceremonies through consultations with bearers, community leaders, women and youth representatives, and the Umukuuka institution, with the goal of obtaining their consent and involvement.

1. Decides that, from the information provided in file no. 02251, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance given in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

**Criterion A.1:** The requesting State Party intends to organize a consultation workshop with the communities concerned to ensure their widest possible involvement in the preparation of the nomination and to obtain their free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. In addition, community members will support the documentation of the cultural practices and rites associated with the Imbalu ceremonies.

**Criterion A.2:** The amount requested by the State Party seems appropriate in relation to the proposed activities for the preparation of the nomination file to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

**Criterion A.3:** The preparatory assistance will support the organization of a consultation workshop that will bring together nearly 160 stakeholders (practitioners, community leaders, custodians). The funds will be also used to prepare a nomination video highlighting the traditions of the Imbalu ceremonies and their contribution to Bamasaaba cultural identity.

**Criterion A.4:** The requesting State Party is committed to submitting a nomination for the possible inscription of the element on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. The submission is expected before 31 March 2025 for possible inscription by the Committee at its twenty-first session, provided that the nomination can be included in the 2026 cycle in application of the annual ceiling for the number of nominations and the priority system in force at the time of the submission.

**Criterion A.5:** The requesting State Party will contribute 6 per cent (US$500) of the total amount of the project for preparatory assistance. Consequently, International Assistance is requested from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the remaining 94 per cent of the total amount of the project.

**Criterion A.6:** The public consultations and the communities’ involvement in the fieldwork should help build their capacities and raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding this element to ensure its continued viability.

**Criterion A.7:** Uganda has benefited from International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for seven completed projects and two ongoing projects.[[1]](#footnote-1) The work stipulated in the contracts related to these projects was and is being carried out in accordance with UNESCO regulations.

1. Approves the request for preparatory assistance from Uganda for the preparation of the nomination for the **Imbalu ceremonies** in view of the submission of the nomination for possible inscription of the element on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding,and grants the amount of US$7,970 to the requesting State Party to this end;
2. Encourages the requesting State Party to strengthen the capacity of the communities concerned to safeguarding the practice in question by explaining the purpose, scope and mechanisms of the 2003 Convention during the consultations;
3. Requests that the Secretariat reach an agreement with the requesting State Party on the technical details of the assistance, paying particular attention to ensuring that the budget and the work plan of the activities to be covered by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund are detailed and specific enough to provide a sufficient justification of all the expenditures;
4. Invites the requesting State Party to use Form ICH-05-Report to report on the use of the assistance granted.

1. (a) ‘Inventorying the intangible cultural heritage of four communities in Uganda’ (US$216,000; July 2013–March 2015); (b) Preparatory assistance (List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding) for the nomination entitled ‘The male-child cleansing ceremony of the Lango people of North Central Uganda (Dwoko Atin Awobi lot)’ (US$8,570; March 2012–March 2013); (c) Preparatory assistance (List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding) for the nomination entitled ‘Madi bow lyre music, O’di’ (US$10,000; December 2013–March 2015); (d) ‘Safeguarding and promotion of Bigwala, gourd trumpet music and dance of Busoga Kingdom in Uganda’ (US$24,990; September 2015–August 2017); (e) ‘Promoting intangible cultural heritage education in institutions of higher learning in Uganda’ (US$97,582; June 2017–June 2020); (f) ‘Community-self documentation and revitalization of ceremonies and practices associated with Empaako naming system in Uganda’ (US$232,120; February 2018–February 2020); (g) ‘Strengthening the capacity of community museums to promote inscribed intangible cultural heritage elements’ (US$61,471; May 2020–June 2022); (h) ‘Consolidating the promotion of intangible cultural heritage education in institutions of higher learning in collaboration with bearer communities’ (US$98,203; April 2024–March 2026); and (i) ‘Consolidating and upscaling efforts of community museums to safeguard six intangible cultural heritage elements in Uganda’ (US$99,601; contract under establishment). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)