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

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

**Tenth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room I**

**11 to 12 June 2024**

**Summary records of the ninth session of the General Assembly  
5 to 7 July 2022  
UNESCO Headquarters, Room I**

The ninth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was convened at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 5 to 7 July 2022. Representatives of 145 States Parties to the Convention participated in the meeting, as well as two State Members of UNESCO or of the UN not Party to the Convention, five International Organizations (other than the United Nations), 49 accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and seven Category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO.

The session was held in the six working languages of the General Assembly: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Living Heritage Entity provided the Secretariat for the meeting.

*The summary records have been drafted based on the transcript of the statements made by the participants during the ninth session of the General Assembly. 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.*

*[Tuesday, 5 July 2022, morning session]*

**ITEM 1 OF THE AGENDA:**

**OPENING OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Documents:**  [*LHE/21/16.COM/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-4-EN.docx)

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

[*LHE/22/9.GA/INF.1*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-INF.1-EN.docx)

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** **of the Secretariat** welcomed the participants and introduced the fire service representativewhopresentedthe security arrangements and public health and safety measures linked to COVID-19.
2. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, Mr Ernesto** **Ottone** (hereinafter ‘the Assistant Director-General’) opened the ninth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention. In the absence of Mr Tim Curtis, the Secretary to the Convention, he would guide the Assembly, assisted by the Secretariat. Following an unprecedented two years since the outbreak of the pandemic, he was glad once again to meet in person to discuss issues of critical importance to the future development of the Convention. The delegates came from all corners of the world, showing their commitment to the Convention through their presence and support. He extended a warm welcome to Somalia and Angola, two new States Parties to the Convention since the last session of the General Assembly in 2020. The year 2022 had been a busy year for the Convention with twelve statutory meetings, which would not have been possible without the commitment and cooperation of the Convention’s governing bodies. This ninth session of the General Assembly can, in all respects, be considered as a culmination of work on several important points. The Assembly would examine the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives, part of the overall reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention that was launched by the Committee in 2018. It would also conclude discussions on the Rules of Procedure, following deliberations during several sessions, with a view to creating better synergies between UNESCO’s culture Conventions. The accreditation of NGOs and the use of resources of the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter ‘the Fund’) were other important points. This session would be decisive, bringing together the various fruits of the States Parties’ work. The decisions made at this Assembly would have a direct impact on how intangible cultural heritage is safeguarded nationally and internationally, as well as for the communities on the ground.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that communities have always been at the centre of the Convention. The process of reform of the listing mechanisms aims to strengthen and guarantee the participation of the communities concerned**.** Given the unprecedented challenges facing the world – from the pandemic to climate change – it is necessary to guarantee that cultural policies are inclusive and sustainable in their approach and focused on the communities. The Convention has been at the forefront of these issues. It has been a reference for States Parties in their conception of public policy and legislation, which acknowledges the importance of living heritage for sustainable development and the role of communities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. As the MONDIACULT[[1]](#footnote-1) conference approaches, the impact of the Convention on cultural policies and living heritage and the role they play in building more resilient and sustainable societies is ever more present. The year 2023 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 Convention, a significant turning point in the life of the Convention. Taking stock of the Convention and how it has progressed over the last two years, the Assembly can rest assured that the Convention continues to evolve to meet the needs of its stakeholders. This can be seen in the reflection on the listing mechanisms or the reform of the periodic reporting, which has already yielded promising results. The Convention also expanded into new areas, with work having commenced on such themes as the relationship between living heritage and climate change, intangible cultural heritage and urban contexts, and intangible cultural heritage and commercialization. The COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the value of intangible cultural heritage and its importance for communities that are attached to its continued practice and expression. Throughout the pandemic, the statutory mechanisms and key operational initiatives of the Convention has continued without interruption, showing that the statutory structures in place are both robust and flexible. This would not have been possible without the commitment of States Parties and their spirit of togetherness and solidarity. Mr Ottone wished the delegates fruitful deliberations.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** welcomed the delegates and presented some practical information.For this meeting, interpretation was in the six working languages. The debates were available through videocast and audiocast, also in six languages, from the webpage[[2]](#footnote-2) of the Convention. All documents were available online in the six working languages. Print copies were not provided for environmental reasons and to reduce costs. All participants were asked to register. The provisional list of participants is available [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/list-of-participants-01245). In line with the latest UNESCO policy, delegates were strongly encouraged to wear a mask throughout the sessions. The Secretariat had planned several special side events during the session, as indicated in the [Calendar of events](https://ich.unesco.org/en/calendar-of-events-01254). There was an exhibition on the UNESCO [MOOC](https://ich.unesco.org/en/massive-online-open-course-mooc-01228) on living heritage and sustainable development developed by UNESCO in collaboration with the International Information and Networking Centre in Asia and the Pacific under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP) and the SDG Academy; this course was produced with the generous support of the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea. There was a projection of [Dive into intangible cultural heritage!](https://ich.unesco.org/en/dive), and a side event on the presentation of the [Toolkit](https://ich.unesco.org/en/requesting-assistance-00039) for requesting International Assistance from the Fund. States Parties and the NGO Forum also organized their own events.
5. The **Assistant Director-General** officially declared the ninth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention open.

**ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ELECTION OF THE BUREAU**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-2-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA.2*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/2)

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** recalled that Article 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly states that the Assembly shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur. The Chairperson and the Rapporteur are elected in their individual capacity, whereas Vice-Chairs are represented by States Parties. A list of previous members of the Bureau is annexed to the working document. Although the Rules do not require it, the custom has always been to ensure that each of the six Electoral Groups is geographically represented in the Bureau. The duty of Rapporteur is important but not too burdensome, whose task is to verify that the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are faithfully recorded by the Secretariat. The Secretariat finalizes the texts of the resolutions adopted in the course of the day, which are checked by the Rapporteur.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** invited Japan to speak concerning the election of the Chairperson.
3. The delegation of **Japan** proposed H.E Ambassador of the Philippines, Ms Junever Mahilum-West, as Chairperson.
4. The **Assistant Director-General** congratulated H.E. Ms Junever Mahilum-West on her election, inviting her to join the podium.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the States Parties for their trust and she continued with the election of the Vice-Chairs.
6. The delegation of **Andorra** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. As Chairperson of Electoral Group I, it proposed **Belgium** as Vice-Chair.
7. The delegation of **Ethiopia** of Group V(a) proposed **Madagascar** as Vice-Chair.
8. The delegation of **Estonia** of Group II proposed **Croatia** as Vice-Chair.
9. The delegation of **Morocco** of Group V(b) proposed the **Syrian Arab Republic** as Vice-Chair.
10. The delegation of **Paraguay** ofGroup III proposed the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** as Vice-Chair.
11. The **Chairperson** proposed to elect the Vice-Chairs by acclamation. Congratulating the Vice-Chairs, she turned to the election of the Rapporteur.
12. The delegation of **Paraguay** nominated Ms Daniela Rodriguez Uribe of Colombia as the Rapporteur.
13. The **Chairperson** pronounced Ms Daniela Rodriguez Uribe elected Rapporteur by acclamation. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 2 adopted**. The Bureau would meet every morning during the term of the Assembly. Meetings were held in English and French, with Observers welcomed to join.

**ITEM 3 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Documents:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-3-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/9.GA/INF.3.1 Rev.2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-INF.3.1_Rev.2-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/9.GA/INF.3.2 Rev.12*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-INF.3.2_Rev.12-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 3*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/3)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** presented the working documents, which had been made available online on the Convention website in six languages. This Assembly had fifteen items inscribed on the provisional agenda. Following its adoption, the General Assembly would be asked to examine item 4 on the distribution of seats on the Committee per Electoral Group. This would be followed by two reports: item 5, the Report by the Committee to the General Assembly; and item 6, the Report by the Secretariat on its activities. An oral report from the ICH NGO Forum would also be presented. Under item 7, the Assembly would examine the accreditation of NGOs to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee. The Assembly would then open item 11 and the election of the Intergovernmental Committee. This would be followed by item 8, the endorsement of the procedure for the inscription of ‘Joumou soup’ on the Representative List submitted by Haiti. Item 9 concerned the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention and proposed revisions to the Operational Directives. The Assembly would then examine item 10, the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. Item 11 would be reopened to formalize the election results before proceeding to examine the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly under item 12. The Assembly would then examine item 13 relating to the proposal for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023, before ‘other business’ under item 14.
2. The **Chairperson** reminded the Assembly that the Bureau would adjust the provisional timetable every morning as appropriate. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 3 adopted**.
3. The **Chairperson** explained how she intended to conduct the debates. The floor would be given to the States Parties in the order they raise their nameplates. Priority would be given to States Parties that had not yet spoken, and she encouraged States Parties not to take the floor more than twice on one point, if possible, limiting their interventions to two minutes. Observers, States not party to the Convention, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs could request the floor during the general discussions, but they could not speak during discussions on a specific resolution. The working documents were made available in six languages and States Parties could speak in any of the languages. However, screens – for the adoption of resolutions – were only in English and French. The Assembly was reminded of Article 11 of the Rules of Procedure in which any significant change should be provided to the Secretariat in writing, ideally in French or English, to facilitate the Secretariat’s work. This allowed the Secretariat to distribute amendments in advance in accordance with Article 11.2. and to prepare a translation into the second language for projection onto the screen. The Secretariat would not be able to edit texts in Arabic, Chinese, Russian or Spanish on the screen.

**ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA:**

**DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE COMMITTEE PER ELECTORAL GROUP**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-4-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 4*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/4)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the distribution of seats in the Committee per Electoral Group, which had to be determined before proceeding to item 11 and the election of members of the Committee.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that the proposed distribution of seats is the result of applying a provision of the Convention, the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, and a Resolution of the General Assembly. First of all, Article 6.1 of the Convention provides that the election of States Members of the Committee shall obey the principles of equitable geographic representation and rotation. Rule 13.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly provides that seats shall be distributed at each session in proportion to the number of States Parties from each Group, provided that after such distribution at least three seats have been attributed to each Group. Resolution [3.GA 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/3.GA/12) of the General Assembly states that the principle of proportionality shall be rigorously applied to future elections, strictly on the basis of mathematical calculations. Paragraph 4 of working document 4 establishes the distribution of seats on the basis of mathematical calculations based on 180 States Parties at the time of the election. Explaining the calculation, Ms Ohinata explained that the minimum number of three seats was attributed to Electoral Group V(b), pursuant to Rule 13.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. The 21 remaining seats were apportioned to the five remaining groups beginning with the group with the highest decimal fraction, which was Electoral Group V(a), to which six seats were attributed. This meant fifteen seats were left for distribution among Groups I, II, III and IV. The distribution continued with the group with the second highest decimal fraction, which is Group IV, to which five seats were attributed, leaving three seats for Group I, three seats for Group II and four seats for Group III.
3. The Assistant Director-General remarked that the distribution of seats had not changed from the previous session of the Assembly despite the increase in States Parties with Somalia and Angola. This was due to 180 States Parties now having ratified the Convention.
4. With no forthcoming comments, the **Chairperson declared** **Resolution 9.GA 4 adopted**.

**ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2021)**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/5*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-5-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 5*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/5)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 5 and the Report by the Committee to the General Assembly covering the period from January 2020 to December 2021. She began by expressing her sincere gratitude to the Chairpersons of the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions of the Committee, The Hon. Ms Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica and Mr Punchi Nilame Meegaswatte from Sri Lanka, respectively, for their able stewardship, which allowed the Committee to accomplish important tasks. The Chairperson, however, regretted that they were unable to attend this session and the Assistant Director-General was asked to present the reports on their behalf. She first invited Ms Joanne Archibald, Director of Culture at the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica, followed by H.E. Prof. Kshanika Hirimburegama, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to UNESCO, to say a few words.
2. **Ms Joanne Archibald** of the delegation of **Jamaica** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. Jamaica thanked UNESCO for its continued work to safeguard the world’s intangible cultural heritage, a mandate made increasingly difficult as the world continued to navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic. Jamaica expressed gratitude to delegations for having supported its bid to host the fifteenth session of the Committee, and for working in an expert and tireless way towards its success. She noted that the Committee met for the first time in a fully online modality from 14 to 18 December 2020. It was a distinct honour for Jamaica’s Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica to serve as Chairperson. Jamaica regretted, however, that it was unable to greet the delegates with its ‘one love’ hospitality, but it welcomed the opportunities to share its reggae music and pioneering reggae chill moments during the meeting’s breaks. Ms Archibald was happy to report that 142 States Parties had registered for 15.COM with 800 direct participants and more than 2,500 persons following the meeting online. The Committee Members inscribed three elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List and 29 elements on the Representative List. The Committee also added three programmes to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The tremendous work and support of the Secretariat cannot be overstated. Jamaica expressed its admiration, appreciation and continued success in executing its mission. As Jamaica completes its tenure on the Committee, it expressed gratitude for the fellowship shown, representing many voices of the Latin America and Caribbean region, as well as those from small island developing States (SIDS) and the rest of the world. Jamaica pledged its unwavering support to furthering the objectives of the Convention and implored the Committee to use its energies to become increasingly more creative and responsive to the needs of all States Parties and to the dangers posed by global warming and other human-induced threats to common heritage. In this regard, Jamaica congratulated UNESCO on its emergency action following the inscription of Joumou soup by Haiti on the Representative List and, more recently, the inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’, the beet-based soup, as part of Ukraine’s intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding. There will always be challenges to the Committee’s work but fundamental to its common mission is the practice of promoting peace in the hearts of all people. In the words of its Rastafarian prophet and poet, Bob Marley, ‘one heart’ is a message that resonates with all of us and will continue to guide the work of this Committee. She concluded by commending the excellent work of the Bureau, wishing the Assembly every success.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked Ms Joanne Archibald, adding that although the fifteenth session of the Committee was unable to be held in Jamaica, the colours and sounds of this vibrant country were transmitted through the reggae chill moments enjoyed by the participants.
4. **H.E. Ms Kshanika** **Hirimburegama**, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, spoke on behalf of Sri Lanka to first congratulate the Chairperson on her election, as well as the Members of the Bureau. Sri Lanka was proud to have been given the opportunity to serve as a member of the Committee for the four-year term that would end on this day. During the past four years, the delegation had the opportunity to work very closely with a large number of persons, including the Assistant Director-General, the Secretary, and the staff of the Secretariat, delegates, experts, Bureau members, members of the Evaluation Body, Observers and NGOs, in dealing with complex issues. If not for the pandemic, Sri Lanka would have welcomed the Committee in 2021. As an outgoing Committee Member, Sri Lanka thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Secretariat and the staff of the UNESCO office, Members of the Committee and the delegates of all States Parties for their support and kindness during its four-year term, especially at the inauguration and throughout the sixteenth session of the Committee. H.E. Ms Kshanika Hirimburegama wished the new Committee Members well in the upcoming election, extending an open initiation to visit Sri Lanka and enjoy its cultural heritage, rich biodiversity, sandy beaches, unique culinary traditions, world famous Ceylon tea and the warm hospitality of its friendly people.
5. The **Chairperson** regretted not having had the opportunity to travel to beautiful Sri Lanka for the sixteenth session of the Committee, adding that the delegations were deeply touched by the blessing of the lighting of oil lamp ceremony that opened the session.
6. The **Assistant Director-General** presented working document 5. In accordance with Article 30.1 of the Convention, the working document contains a report on the activities and decisions taken by the Committee and its Bureau during its fifteenth session in 2020 and its sixteenth session in 2021 during the reporting period (January 2020 to December 2021). Once approved, the report will be presented at the 42nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2023. It was an unprecedented time for the Committee as both sessions were held online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This required rescheduling meetings, postponing statutory deadlines and adapting meeting content to an online format. Working document 5 provides a full list of all the activities and decisions taken by the Committee and its Bureau from January 2020 to December 2021. Mr Ottone was encouraged to see that the Convention continued to grow with the ratification of two new States Parties, Angola and Somalia, bringing the total number of States Parties to 180. The reporting period was also marked by the successful implementation of the first regional reporting cycle for the periodic reporting mechanism, which was aligned with the overall results framework on the basis of a regional cycle of reporting. The new system already demonstrated a greatly improved submission rate. In 2021, 87% of reports were submitted from the Latin America and Caribbean region, i.e. 28 reports were submitted out of an expected total of 32. These reports were examined by the Committee at its sixteenth session. For Europe, the situation was equally encouraging as the submission rates for reports received at the end of 2021 amounted to 95%.
7. The **Assistant Director-General** also noted that the Committee had examined the recommendation of the Open-ended working group, part of the overall reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, which was presented to this Assembly as a proposal for the revision of the Operational Guidelines. During its sixteenth session, the Committee also examined the main conclusions and recommendations of the 2021 evaluation conducted by the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) concerning UNESCO's action under the Convention. At the same time, the Committee continued to consider capacity-building as central to the mandate of the Convention. It was consequently approved as one of the two global funding priorities of the Convention together with safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. Finally, during the reporting period, the Committee inscribed a total of 74 elements on the Lists of the Convention: 7 on the Urgent Safeguarding List and 67 on the Representative List. The Committee also selected 7 Good Safeguarding Practices. In addition, a total of 15 out of 20 International Assistance requests had been approved by the Committee and by the Bureau (for requests exceeding US$100,000). The total amount approved was US$1,659,443.
8. The **Chairperson** congratulated the Committee for accomplishing a tremendous number of tasks and having done so under the challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted the Committee’s flexibility to work in a new way as well as the commitment shown by States Parties in the successful conduct of the two online sessions.
9. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** congratulated the Chairperson on her chairpersonship, thanking the Secretariat for the preparation of this meeting and for the clear documents. The Netherlands always attaches great importance to the role of communities and capacity-building, especially with regard to sustainable development, formal and non-formal education, and intangible heritage in emergencies, stating that global-capacity building and International Assistance programmes remained the most important instruments of the Convention. The Netherlands also strongly supported the valuable work of the global network of facilitators[[3]](#footnote-3) and the NGO Forum, calling for greater emphasis on these parts of the Convention. It furthermore fully supported the strategic repositioning of the global capacity-building programme to a multimodal approach. The delegation recognized the importance of new and attractive ways to digitally share knowledge and involve young people with intangible heritage. Since it was its last time as a Committee Member, it expressed its gratitude for the fruitful discussions of the past four years and for the progress made to raise awareness of the value of intangible heritage for peace and prosperity at local, national and global levels.
10. The delegation of **Montenegro** congratulated the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairs on their election. On behalf of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, the delegation condemned Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine. It deeply regretted Russia’s illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in Ukraine, and the destabilization of Donbas, which had escalated to a war since February 2022. The delegation noted that this was a violation of international law, including the principles of the United Nations Charter as well as of the UNESCO Constitution. The delegation deplored that Ukraine, its communities, groups and individuals, including in Crimea, were forced to join the growing list of conflict areas in the world that are being denied the ability to express their cultural identity and the practice of their living heritage. It recalled the fifth principle of the [Ethical Principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866) for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage that stipulates that ‘access of communities, groups and individuals to the instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural and natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage should be ensured, including in situations of armed conflict.’ The delegation also recalled that, according to the Operational Principles and Modalities for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Emergencies[[4]](#footnote-4) adopted in 2020, ‘intangible cultural heritage exists only in its enactment by the communities who practise and transmit it, and is inseparable from their social, cultural and economic life. Its safeguarding is therefore indivisible from the protection of the lives and well-being of its bearers’ [under Principle 1]. The aforementioned delegations therefore urged Russia to halt its activities throughout Ukrainian territory, and any other form of hostile aggression, and withdraw its forces and military equipment, to cease its war and bring an end to the loss of human life and both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that these attacks had caused. The delegations welcomed the assessment of the nomination of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List as a case of extreme urgency under Article 17.3 of the Convention, and they commended both the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for their effective cooperation under difficult circumstances. The delegations therefore welcomed its inscription and thanked the Committee Members for their timely decision to protect this element. Finally, the delegations invited Ukraine, in collaboration with the communities concerned, to consider requesting emergency International Assistance as defined in the Convention. It also called for all States Parties to the Convention, UNESCO and any other relevant national or international stakeholders to continue to provide support based on identified needs for the safeguarding of Ukraine’s intangible cultural heritage.
11. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and commended the excellent work of the Secretariat under the leadership of Mr Tim Curtis, wishing him a speedy recovery. Kazakhstan supported the proposed draft decision and expressed its gratitude to the Secretariat for the progress made in the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. Kazakhstan had played an active part in the meetings of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group and it hoped that the adoption of the additions and modifications proposed by the working group and the Committee will lead to important results for the future development of the Convention. The delegation understood that the format of the reports presented on the work of the Committee and the Secretariat could not include all the different forms and methods of work carried out by countries. In this regard, Kazakhstan had started active work in two priority areas of the Convention. Firstly, in promoting the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and its dissemination among young people. With the support of ICHCAP[[5]](#footnote-5) Category 2 centre, a significant amount of information on Kazakh elements of intangible cultural heritage became available on the ichLinks[[6]](#footnote-6) digital platform, generating great interest among bearers and local communities who had requested additional information, expressing their intention to contribute to the implementation of the Convention. The Kazakh National Committee organized an online forum. The *Kazakh Post* published and distributed a postage stamp throughout the country dedicated to the tenth anniversary of Kazakhstan’s accession to the Convention. A second stamp will be issued to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan, the National Committee launched a pilot project involving teams of schoolchildren and local communities of bearers in five rural districts of Kazakhstan, with local historical and ethnographic museums coordinating and leading the work. Based on the results of the pilot project, it is expected that the Ministry of Education will make changes to local history textbooks. This is consistent with the adopted orientations of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 in terms of synergy between education and cultural heritage programmes. The delegation remarked that the last 30 years of fruitful cooperation with UNESCO had made it possible for the world to discover the country’s contribution to the development of universal culture, as clearly demonstrated by the world’s lists of cultural and natural heritage. The Convention had given a different meaning to nomadic culture within universal cultural heritage. This could not be achieved with other known cultural and legal mechanisms. Kazakhstan will thus continue to actively participate in the implementation of the Convention and was open to cooperation with all countries interested in its projects.
12. The delegation of **Brazil** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and recognized the great contribution of Jamaica to the discussion undertaken by the Committee in 2021. Brazil thanked the Secretariat for its very detailed report on the last Committee session. As a Member of the Committee, Brazil wished to take note of a few key points. First, the relevance accorded by States to intangible cultural heritage, which constitutes a substantive part of their identities and unites communities. Second, the success and universality of the 2003 Convention, which just reached 180 States Parties with the recent accession of Angola and Somalia. Third, the robustness and ease of procedures under the Convention, which allows for inclusiveness as more and more countries are able to inscribe their cultural elements, enriching the Lists and reinforcing cultural diversity around the world. This is one of the main reasons for the success of the Convention but is also one of the challenges, for example, the 1972 Convention is struggling to simplify processes which are still too complex and cumbersome for many countries. It is therefore one of the Convention’s strengths, which must be preserved as the frameworks of the Convention are reinforced. This should be kept in mind when reviewing the Operational Directives under item 9. Another substantial benefit that comes from the easiness of the Convention is its flexibility. At its last session in 2021, the Committee inscribed Joumou soup on the Representative List, a traditional soup from Haiti, which is inextricably linked to the history of the Haitian people in their fight for independence and freedom from slavery. This was possible just as Haiti was facing a severe humanitarian crisis, resulting from a natural disaster that occurred within a broader context of political and social unrest. The delegation hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the actions of this Committee and reinforce expressions of solidarity with Haiti and its people. It was also glad to have supported the inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List a few days earlier during an extraordinary Committee session. This was another demonstration of UNESCO’s capacity to respond swiftly to situations of emergency to protect cultural property, while at the same time instilling a sense of hope among people faced with adversity. Lastly, on the 74 nominations inscribed during the last Committee, the delegation noted that 67 had been inscribed on the Representative List with only 7 nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and 7 files selected as Good Safeguarding Practices. This overemphasized the importance of the Representative List, with the two other Lists relegated to secondary status, which should not at all be the case. All three Lists are equally important and reflect different aspects of intangible heritage. It was hoped that the Assembly could think about ways to find a new balance between the three mechanisms.
13. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and extended warm congratulations to the newly elected members of the Bureau, as well as Angola and Somalia for having acceded the Convention. Since 2009, three years following its ratification, Burkina Faso had already undertaken thematic inventories in the field of the performing arts in the Senufo region. This work led to the inscription of ‘Cultural practices and expressions linked to the balafon of the Senufo communities’ on the Representative List in 2012; an element shared with two bordering countries, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali. Following this inscription, Burkina Faso undertook, in 2014 and 2017, a general inventory of intangible cultural heritage, following which 1,492 cultural elements were identified, including 155 awaiting inscription on the list of national heritage. Since 2016, these significant findings were taken into consideration in public policy and in the recent adoption of the Charter of Values in 2022, which places intangible cultural heritage at the heart of governance in Burkina Faso. The delegation commended the excellent work of the Committee which, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, had made remarkable progress in the last cycle of reports on the implementation of the Convention. Burkina Faso is honouring its commitment to submit its report before the deadline of 15 December 2023. Burkina Faso also adhered to the two global funding priorities identified by the Committee, and it commended the States Parties that had supported the implementation of the Convention through voluntary contributions. It congratulated the Committee for the inclusive consultation process that led to a global reflection on the listing mechanisms through the meetings of the Open-ended working group. Burkina Faso also supported the development of measures for the urgent safeguarding of cultural heritage in countries in crisis.
14. The delegation of **Malaysia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur. It thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive presentation and thanked all the elected Members of the Bureau of the fifteenth session of the Committee, with a special thanks to the Members of the Bureau of the sixteenth session for their excellent work despite the difficulties in the implementation of the meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Malaysia appreciated the good work of the Committee in reforming the mechanism of periodic reporting, the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, and the 2020 evaluation of UNESCO’s action in the framework of the 2003 Convention by the Internal Oversight Services (IOS). It also welcomed the efforts to strengthen the capacity-building programme and the guidelines on safeguarding measures and good practices, integrating intangible cultural heritage into development plans, policies and programmes, raising awareness and outreach programmes and activities, and preparing a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund. Malaysia also welcomed Angola and Somalia. Finally, Malaysia thanked the Committee and the Secretariat of the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions for the listing of its intangible cultural heritage elements of ‘Pantun’ [in 2020], a multinational nomination with Indonesia, ‘Wangkang’ with China [in 2020], and ‘Songket’ [in 2021]. The joint inscriptions are particularly significant for Malaysia as they were its first multinational nomination as a State Party, and it will continue to take an active role in the implementation of the Convention.
15. The delegation of **Poland** congratulated the Chairperson on her appointment and thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of this meeting, the first *in præsentia* since the pandemic. As a Member of the Committee, Poland thanked Jamaica and Sri Lanka for their excellent work in organizing their respective Committee sessions during the pandemic. The meetings were challenging, but thanks to common determination the Committee managed to continue to protect intangible cultural heritage by adding new inscriptions to the Lists and providing necessary assistance to countries in need. Over the last two Committee sessions, a lot had been achieved. First of all, the Open-ended working group, with Poland serving as Vice-Chair, finalized the global reflection on the listing mechanisms; the resulting Recommendations to amend the Operational Directives would be presented under item 9. Poland thanked the Government of Japan for its support, especially H.E. Ambassador Atsuyuki Oike for his great chairing of this long but very effective process. During the last two years there had been many challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine demanded rapid and timely reactions. To continue the spirit of the Convention, clear and transparent procedures are needed for the proper implementation of its provisions. Poland welcomed the Committee’s decision to inscribe Haiti’s Joumou soup on the Representative List on an exceptional basis given that Haiti is facing a humanitarian crisis caused by natural hazards. It also welcomed the inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List as part of Ukraine’s intangible cultural heritage inscribed in a case of extreme urgency under Article 17.3 of the Convention. During this Assembly, Poland would fulfil its mandate as a Member of the Committee and it thanked colleagues for the fruitful and constructive work. It was a true honour and pleasure to contribute to this Committee and to work together on the implementation of the Convention.
16. The delegation of **Romania** congratulated the Chairperson and the Members of the Bureau on their election, wishing them every success. Despite all the difficulties imposed by the pandemic, the Committee had been able to carry out its activities and it was thankful to all the Members of the Committee for their work. The delegation congratulated the two recent countries that had ratified the Convention, which testified to the increasingly important place of this instrument among UNESCO’s other culture Conventions. Romania welcomed the implementation of the new periodic reporting mechanism and the move to a regional cycle of reporting and the drafting of results-based reports, as well as the progress made in the consultative process regarding the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. It underlined the importance it attaches to the implementation of effective mechanisms that integrate intangible heritage and its bearers, where the emphasis is on peace, sustainable development, green energies, ecosystem protection, as well as formal and non-formal education. The Assembly was gathered under the heavy context generated by the war in Ukraine, which clearly shows the undeniable link between the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and the protection of life and the well-being of its bearers. In this context, the delegation welcomed the recent decision taken by the Committee, during an extraordinary session, to inscribe the ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
17. The delegation of **Viet Nam** congratulated the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairs and thanked the Committee Members for their effective work during the unprecedent circumstances of COVID-19. The Assembly could be proud of what had been achieved in promoting the objectives of the Convention, encouraging and monitoring its implementation, and providing guidance, strengthening the capacity-building programme, especially the landmark progress concerning the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, and for successfully implementing the reformed periodic reporting mechanism. It also commended efforts by the Secretariat to ensure that business continues under such a challenging situation. Intangible cultural heritage is not only a vital source for cultural diversity, creativity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, it is also a driver for sustainable development and resilience. Viet Nam is firmly committed to the implementation and noble objectives of the Convention. In the past years, it has tried its best to mainstream the content of intangible cultural heritage into law, translating it into reality. Viet Nam has now embarked on the revision of the law on cultural heritage in the spirit of valuing the role and contribution of intangible cultural heritage artisans, communities and owners in terms of transmission, inventory, approach, and documenting and promoting the values of intangible cultural heritage. It also seeks to focus on the preferential treatment and recognition of the contributions of artisans, including awarding titles, such as ‘emeritus artisans’ and ‘people’s artisans’, and other relevant support. It also aimed to set rules in terms of the responsibility of local authorities for the protection of inscribed heritage locally and internationally, reflecting Viet Nam’s commitments to UNESCO. Viet Nam has also undertaken innovative education-related safeguarding measures related to intangible cultural heritage, as well as various measures to raise awareness among local communities, and to enhance ownership of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage among both practitioners and communities. Accredited NGOs have actively contributed to this process. In the run-up to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and, given the pandemic and digital transformation, the value of intangible cultural heritage and the importance and value communities attach to its continued practice and expression is evident more than ever. As we embark on the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy C/4 and C/5, expediting commitments towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Viet Nam stood ready to work closely with States Parties to ensure living heritage for resilience and sustainable development, to improve the transparency and efficiency of the listing mechanisms, and to strengthen UNESCO priorities, such as Priority Africa, gender equality and youth, through cooperation and capacity-building endeavours in the field of living heritage.
18. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and commended the Secretariat for the efficient work and organization of the current session of the Assembly. It also joined others in welcoming two more States Parties from Africa, namely, Angola and Somalia. The delegation also commended Jamaica and Sri Lanka for efficiently leading both the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions of the Committee despite the adverse effects of the pandemic. As an outgoing Member, Azerbaijan thanked all the Members of the Committee for their hard work and outstanding results in advancing the implementation of the Convention, in particular, with regard to the reformed periodic reporting mechanism and the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. It would also welcome particular focus on strengthening the capacity-building programme and raising awareness on the importance of intangible cultural heritage protection.
19. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** joined previous speakers in congratulating the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairs and the Secretariat for the work done during the past two years. It thanked the Assistant Director-General for the detailed report and commended the work of the Committee despite recent difficulties. Uzbekistan supports all endeavours, including the initiatives begun by the Committee, adding that it was a resolute supporter of the Convention. It had long taken bold steps to save and promote its rich intangible cultural heritage. In the last two years – to promote intangible cultural heritage regionally – Uzbekistan had launched the Khiva Process[[7]](#footnote-7), which was adopted by the General Conference and Executive Board. It is aimed at enhancing the unity of communities and nations and will be an asset to the Convention. It was also in the process of amending its Constitution and, in the draft proposals, there were several Articles aimed at reinforcing stakeholder activities to safeguard the country’s rich cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage. In addition, Uzbekistan was, for the first time, running for membership of the Committee in this electoral cycle. The country has an immense potential with twelve elements on the Representative List and many more on the waiting list. With its experience and knowledge, it can contribute substantially to promote the Convention regionally and globally, in particular, assisting in preparing nominations, reinforcing capacity-building, and improving policies and practices.
20. The delegation of **Lithuania** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and welcomed the Committee’s report, which presented an expanded scope of activities carried out during the reporting period, including a significant number of nominations examined, an increase in multinational inscriptions, an analysis of periodic reports, and many approved working documents. Lithuania also congratulated the two new States Parties, Angola and Somalia. It appreciated the great progress made in the use of dialogue mechanisms and the adaptation to online working conditions due to the pandemic. The delegation was particularly pleased with the results of the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee, which approved the relevant proposals for the revision of the Operational Directives to be presented to this Assembly. In particular, it welcomed Ukraine’s inscription, the ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’. The delegation was of the opinion that the use of Article 17.3 of the Convention had been justified because Ukraine, and all its cultural communities, were suffering enormously from the war in Ukraine, which not only threatens the viability of intangible cultural heritage but also endangers creativity and human rights. Lithuania supported the statement concerning the situation of intangible cultural heritage in Ukraine, which was delivered by Montenegro on behalf of several countries. It also supported the draft decision approving the report of the Committee and it sincerely thanked all the Committee Members for the excellent work carried out and all the efforts made in the implementation of the Convention.
21. The delegation of **Latvia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its work preparing this Assembly. It expressed appreciation for the highly effective work of the Committee, including its work on the global reflection of the listing mechanisms despite the restrictive COVID-19 conditions experienced during the reporting period. Latvia expressed its support, in particular, to continuing the reflection process on the advisory functions to be performed by accredited NGOs. Latvia voiced its continuous commitment to the significant role that NGOs play in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and their cooperation both at international, national and local levels. Latvia also stressed the importance of raising awareness and outreach on intangible cultural heritage among wider audiences for whom the intangible cultural heritage concept and its connection to sustainable development are still novel. It saw the importance of networks in carrying out this mission, especially the role of NGOs, which work directly with local communities.
22. The delegation of **Colombia** congratulated the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairs on their election, thanking the delegations for their vote of confidence in electing Ms Daniela Rodriguez Uribe [in her personal capacity] as the Rapporteur. The delegation also thanked the Secretariat for its very thorough preparation of this session and to the Committee for its work. As the twentieth anniversary of the Convention approaches, the delegation remarked on the importance of reaching near universality and continuing to promote science and awareness-raising when it comes to informing cultural policy in all countries. Similarly, the Convention is entering a period of optimism, as the reformed periodic report mechanism will enable more solid reporting going forward to better understand the role of stakeholders in the Convention, with Colombia strongly committed to sustainable development. With regard to awareness-raising and outreach about the Convention, the delegation wished to hear more about the engagement of people on these platforms and what form they will take, as well as the results generated. The delegation extended a special thanks to the Government of Japan for its generous support to the work accomplished in the Open-ended working group on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms that concern States Parties, NGOs and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention. It believed that the decisions to be taken and discussed under item 9 [on the global reflection] will renew the commitment towards the bearer communities and all the actors involved in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
23. The delegation of **Colombia** also found important to enhance dialogue and strengthen intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. Education is extremely important for acknowledging and promoting the different forms of production and transmission of traditional knowledge and cultural values of communities around the world, helping to understand how they are used to promote and ensure the well-being of bearers. Colombia is fully convinced that professional and university-level training should have linkages to the safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Over the last three years Colombia has focused on institutions involved in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage by fostering greater access to cultural heritage practices and techniques by focusing on how bearers can transmit their knowledge to the younger generation based on new instruments within their cultural context. These efforts have been undertaken as part of Colombia’s recognition of its human capital and the importance of the spiritual and collective well-being of all different aspects of society in Colombia, which is fundamental to the development of the country. Over and above a very solid cultural policy Colombia also has a new legal framework on traditional trades that acknowledges the importance of apprenticeship in traditional knowledge. This not only touches upon the cultural sector but all labour laws in the country. Moreover, the Viche law acknowledges the traditional knowledge of the peoples of Colombia and is a tribute to the ancestral drink, Viche, which brings together cultural and health sectors, and has led to the adoption of good practices involving Colombian cuisine. Colombia also has new legislation on the construction of its traditional housing. This is why Colombia encourages States Parties to integrate the Convention into their education, health and housing sectors, for example. The delegation reiterated the importance of the work undertaken by States Parties and the Secretariat to position the Convention as a tool for dialogue and a lever for peace. It wished the Bureau of the Assembly every success going forward.
24. The delegation of **Grenada** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau members, welcoming Angola and Somalia to the Convention. It commended the Secretariat for its efforts in preparing the Assembly and for its support to the Committee. The delegation also thanked Jamaica and Sri Lanka for their reports, commending the Committee for ensuring the continuity of the Committee’s work despite the challenging circumstances of the global pandemic. In particular, it welcomed the efforts to strengthen the capacity-building programme, which is fundamental to the mandate of the Convention, as well as all the activities to safeguard living heritage in the context of disaster risk reduction. Implemented online in the Philippines and Honduras, such activities are also important to SIDS. The delegation thanked the donors for their voluntary supplementary contributions and noted with satisfaction that a total of 31 countries had received financial assistance from the Fund during the reporting period. It thanked the Committee for approving Grenada’s project, ‘Proud of my Heritage: transmission and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in Grenada through inventorying and education initiatives’.[[8]](#footnote-8) This project was officially launched in February 2022 through an online event and it will continue until January 2023, resulting in an educational programme called ‘Proud of my Heritage’. The participating schools and communities will take part in tailoring inventorying exercises, and ‘living heritage’ will be integrated into the school curriculum. ‘Proud of my Heritage’ is also the name of a national awareness-raising campaign, which will also be diffused through dedicated media platforms.
25. The delegation of **Mauritania** expressed thanks to the Chairperson, the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for the excellent work accomplished. The world is facing a number of serious challenges on many levels, reinforcing peace is therefore more important than ever and the only way to achieve this is to respect the cultural diversity of all peoples and nations. We must preserve and protect intangible cultural heritage because it represents peoples’ identities, customs and traditions, as well as the various modalities of coexistence in different countries. The protection of intangible cultural heritage is one of the noble objectives of UNESCO. We must protect cultural specificities from globalization, which strips these civilizations of the ethical and moral systems of certain countries, especially in the developing world. The Committee must bravely use its mandate to help prevent conflict and the damage wrought to the wealth of intangible cultural heritage, which represent cultures that have been alive for centuries. This Assembly must therefore think in a comprehensive manner to bring the necessary modifications to the Operational Directives and the Rules of Procedure. This Convention must be consistent with the other culture Conventions of UNESCO. In order to implement the true goals of the Convention, States Parties must feel that they belong to a single international family and all must participate in the protection and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in an enlightened vision. Equal footing must be given to all countries without any exceptions and without any discrimination based on the principles of democratic process and equal geographic distribution so that more importance is not granted to one country or region at the expense of others. As independent sovereign countries, decisions must be appropriate and taken with a sense of cooperation so as to represent the cultural diversity of all countries. We must build bridges between cultures and civilizations so as to work together in order to transmit intangible cultural heritage in a way that implements the Convention more effectively and benefits all countries with equal representation and participation in the search for peace and fraternity so as to tackle the problems of the past and the challenges of the present and future. Mauritania is a candidate to join the Committee for the 2022-2026 term, carrying its strong Arab and African identity and its strong commercial ties to Europe, Asia and the Americas thanks to its long coastline. It is a culturally and ethnically diverse country, and it looked forward to working together with all Parties to achieve a qualitative leap towards granting equal importance to cultures and civilizations, especially African countries and SIDS as well as developing countries. Developing countries must be prioritized in helping to protect their intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO brings all States together and upholds cultural diversity and noble ideals so that cultural diversity may endure.
26. The delegation of **Barbados** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and commended the Secretariat and the Committee on their work and commitment to the successful implementation of the Convention. Barbados supports the work of the Convention and recognizes the strides and achievements made over the years, particularly as the Convention prepares to celebrate its twentieth anniversary. In 2021, Barbados established its National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, chaired by Mr Rodney Grant. From its inception, the national committee has drafted and implemented a national intangible cultural heritage programme, which includes the development of a twelve-part video series entitled ‘Our Earth and Our Intangible Cultural Heritage’, which was presented to the Barbadian public on national television. This series recognized the Barbadian public and the Barbadian diaspora as the nation’s intangible cultural heritage stakeholders. The series primarily focused on public awareness and engagement, as well as documenting intangible cultural heritage from knowledge bearers. Each session addresses a particular intangible cultural heritage domain. The public awareness programme included another project targeted to youth. In consultation with the UNESCO Kingston office, Barbados has articulated a conceptual approach, ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage in Motion’ with funding from UNESCO. The project was developed to address the recommendations from the *UNESCO Living Heritage in the Face of COVID-19*[[9]](#footnote-9)report. The activity sought to promote the country’s intangible cultural heritage to the younger generation. This two-part project launched its first component on 30 December 2021 in a session streamed online. The launch showcased the committee’s documentary intangible culture series. The second component of the project was an online forum series entitled, ‘Voice of Barbados, ICH in motion’. This component presented the Barbadian public with information from key Barbadian knowledge bearers. The series primarily focused on public awareness and engagement, as well as documenting intangible cultural heritage from callers and participants of five online forums. Each online session addressed a particular domain, commencing with performing arts and concluding with traditional artisanship. Barbados intends to accelerate its public awareness youth campaign through partnership of the Ministry of Education with tertiary institutions. Details of which would be shared alongside plans to celebrate the Convention’s twentieth anniversary. Barbados thanked the UNESCO cluster office for its support of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee. It also expressed thanks to Morocco and Jamaica for having shared information relative to the preparation of inventories and community outreach programmes. The delegation also expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for its generous contribution to the Open-ended working group [on the listing mechanisms of the Convention]. Barbados will continue its commitment to partnerships to further the goals and objectives of the Convention.
27. The delegation of **Ethiopia** congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the outgoing Members of the Committee, in particular, the Africa Group. It also congratulated Angola and Somalia for joining the Convention, thanking Jamaica and Sri Lanka for their great work leading their respective Committee sessions, especially Jamaica with the ‘one love’ motto which symbolizes the objectives and aspirations of this Convention. The delegation also highly appreciated the work of the Secretariat during the past two years of the pandemic, which highlighted its passion and dedication to the Convention and the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. However, the delegation was concerned that many of the nomination files rejected during the last two [Committee] meetings came from Africa. Although they were rejected on technical grounds, it nevertheless highlighted the need for synergy between the Priority Africa agenda of UNESCO and the objectives of the Convention, which is to be truly representative of all regions, particularly Africa. The aim of the Convention is of course to preserve the heritage of all humanity, with the preservation and transmission of heritage creating a greater understanding between countries and peoples, thereby constructing peace in the minds and hearts of humanity. The delegation thus asked the Secretariat and States Parties to focus on capacity-building, working with Member States to enable inscriptions of all intangible cultural heritage. In this light, the delegation fully supported the approach taken to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in danger, which require exceptional measures. In this regard, it fully supported the inscription of Joumou soup submitted by Haiti. Haiti has a particularly special place in African hearts, a piece of Africa in the Americas. Joumou soup symbolizes Haiti’s fight for freedom and the dignity of its people, but not only for the people of Haiti but for all Africans. The delegation viewed the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage as part and parcel of overall development policies. Ethiopia has inscribed and inventoried 95% of its intangible cultural heritage. Four of these have been globally inscribed and it is working to inscribe many more. The delegation looked forward to garnering support in the technical domain, together with the Secretariat, for countries in Africa. It would of course be honoured to be elected as candidate to the Committee from Group V(a) to represent Africa.
28. The delegation of **Cameroon** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the work carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Convention. On behalf of the Government, the delegation congratulated the Chairperson on her election and reaffirmed the interest expressed by H.E. Mr Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, who defines culture as the cement that unifies the country. It is through this will and belief in cooperation, as a universal tool for bringing people and peoples together, that Cameroon ratified the Convention on 9 October 2012. Intangible cultural heritage is an essential link in Cameroon’s vision in its National Strategy for Development and Structural Transformation by 2030 with regard to the objectives of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations. Intangible cultural heritage allows humanity to use the intrinsic diversity of its resources and the powers of social, economic and ethical transformation of societies to offer immense possibilities of rapprochement between peoples of various countries and communities, bringing local solutions to development problems. Although Cameroon does not yet have an element on the lists of the Convention, it is strong in its determination and resilience and hopes that this wish will soon become a reality. In this regard, as its term of office on the Committee comes to an end, the Government of Cameroon thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for their professionalism and for accompanying Cameroon [during its mandate]. The delegation renewed its commitment to revitalizing its partnership with UNESCO by identifying the essential priorities for the implementation of the Convention, as well as the various programmes and functions as defined in Article 5 of the Convention. Cameroon also supported the reflections undertaken to improve the inscription criteria on the various lists of the Convention, which are subject to the approval of the General Assembly. It hoped that the development of the Operational Directives will make it possible to better integrate the specificities of the least represented countries, particularly Africa. Cameroon reaffirmed its unwavering attachment to the noble principles and values of the Convention.
29. The delegation of **Armenia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the members of the Bureau, welcoming Angola and Somalia to the Convention. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for fully ensuring its activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the importance of this support in building the capacities of States Parties and accompanying them in the presentation of their national reports. It was also grateful to the Secretariat for supporting safeguarding efforts at the national level through the international assistance mechanisms. In this regard, the delegation was pleased that special attention was accorded to Africa as well as to SIDS. Armenia welcomed the decision to grant its request for International Assistance for the project, ‘Community-based inventory: documenting and safeguarding the folklore of the Syunik region of Armenia’[[10]](#footnote-10). It noted that it attaches great importance to the preservation of heritage in this region, which retains traces of Armenian’s thousand-year history. With regard to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations, the delegation was pleased that the Secretariat had continued its collaboration with the Secretariat of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols with a view to preparing a reflection document on synergies in this field. Nevertheless, the delegation observed that the provisions in force unfortunately remain – in certain cases – ineffective in the face of facts, in particular, as concerns the safeguarding of this heritage in situations of conflict. The delegation noted that it was particularly concerned about the consequences of the aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in autumn 2020, which saw the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian populations in certain territories of Nagorno-Karabakh, particularly in the region of Hadrout and Chouchi. It noted that the expulsion of these communities poses serious threats to intangible cultural heritage, making it impossible for them to transmit it, or to ensure, their viability and safeguarding. The delegation also underlined that the issue of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh will remain at the centre of Armenia’s attention. Armenia was also attentive to the safeguarding programme of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. It is indeed important to highlight the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the context of education for global citizenship, and that young people – who are the main beneficiaries – are mobilized on this issue. The delegation concluded by mentioning climate change and its impact on people and the environment, which remains one of Armenia’s primary concerns. In this regard, it is essential to continue working on the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and climate change.
30. The delegation of **Ukraine** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat, the Bureau and the Committee for the excellent work in assisting States Parties in the implementation of the Convention. It also emphasized the importance of the processes and decisions carried out to strengthen the Convention in its role to protect intangible cultural heritage and, in this regard, the great work done recently to improve the procedure for inscriptions. The delegation thanked all the countries that had supported the inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List as a case of extreme urgency. It also thanked the Members States that helped and contributed to projects and programmes to preserve the intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine. This has shown the importance of common efforts that can be applied within the framework of the Convention in emergency situations. The inscription of ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ is very significant and an important event for Ukraine. The delegation noted that despite all the social and humanitarian threats resulting from the full-scale Russian war against Ukraine, many Ukrainian families eat borscht yesterday, today and forever on Ukrainian territory. In destroyed cities, on the front line, in other countries that kindly shelter Ukrainians, Ukrainian borscht is its single gastronomic symbol and a marker of its national identity. The culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking is not only an element of intangible cultural heritage but also a way of life. It contributes to strong social dialogue and interaction among all social groups of Ukrainian society. The cooking of this national dish and love for it unites people, while emphasizing the uniqueness of each region. Food always unites people and there is a connection between food, tradition and memory. Ukrainian borscht is a mandatory element of Ukrainian ritual cultures. However, Ukrainians want borscht to continue to be associated with wonderful Ukrainian traditions, not famine and war. The delegation noted that the full-scale Russian war against Ukraine has completely changed its understanding of the world but also its attitude towards values and traditions. Knowing that culture can be lost at any moment forces communities to take the safeguarding of national intangible cultural heritage even more seriously. In an unprecedented sense of unity, all Ukrainians have rallied together for Ukrainian freedom, territory, integrity and culture. The bearer communities will continue to make every effort to ensure that the element develops and that threats to its existence are prevented. Finally, the delegation concluded by saying that this inscription shows the importance of safeguarding Ukrainian traditions, and Ukrainians will fight to stop Russian aggression.
31. The delegation of **Egypt** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, and Angola and Somalia on their ratification. It commended the report on the two sessions of the Committee, which in many instances highlights the success of the Convention. The delegation had cooperated with both Committees in order to strengthen the protection of intangible cultural heritage. It welcomed the support it received to document artisanship in a region in southern Egypt. The activities for strengthening these elements are very important, particularly in terms of the support provided to the bearers of these elements. However, given the high number of nominations, the Assembly must review the criteria and the Operational Directives in order to manage these files. It must also review the way NGOs are accredited and how they cooperate with the Organization, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of each country.
32. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the outgoing Members of the Committee and Egypt, as Vice-Chair, on behalf of Group V(b), reaffirming that Syria will continue to support the Convention. The delegation thanked the Culture Sector and the Secretariat for their efforts and welcomed the ratification of Somalia and Angola. As States Parties, individuals and NGOs, all had contributed their expertise and collaborated to strengthen common objectives, which was why the Convention was now almost universal. This success was achieved despite the pandemic and is a testament to the efforts of the Committee and the reforms made to successfully implement the Convention’s objectives, notably, in the higher rate of submission of national reports. The delegation commended the reforms, including the governance of the Convention and the work of the Open-ended working group on the inscription criteria and Operational Directives. These efforts must continue to protect intangible heritage. Indeed, the documents presented, in particular, to align the Rules of Procedure of this Convention with the Model Rules of Procedure, is extremely important. The delegation commended the rapid, innovative response of UNESCO’s Culture Sector and the Secretariat to protect living heritage, particularly in emergency situations, adding that living heritage is a tool for building national capacities to increase resilience. For this reason, it supported the inscription of ‘Joumou soup’ proposed by Haiti. The Convention must move away from all politicization and ‘double standards’ so that all Member States have the same opportunities and apply the same decisions. Syria respects the decisions adopted which respect national principles. It fully supported the Convention, which comes from its attachment to its heritage, which is part of its identity and millennial history. The Ministry of Culture created a department of intangible cultural heritage and it participates in all international events on this subject, implementing important measures to protect Syrian artisanship. For example, it helped inscribe ‘Shadow play’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List[[11]](#footnote-11). The country had begun a major national debate with all stakeholders to adopt the first National Strategy for the Protection and Safeguard of Intangible Cultural Heritage and, through this national dialogue, many recommendations had been adopted, drawing inspiration from the principles of the Convention. A constructive debate was expected during this session, especially to protect intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations, and it was hoped that there would be opportunities for international cooperation.
33. The delegation of **Democratic Republic of the Congo** congratulated the Chairperson and the other elected members of the Bureau, as well as the Secretariat for the work carried out over the past two years and for the presentation of its report. The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomed the multinational inscription in December 2021, together with the Republic of the Congo, of ‘Congolese rumba’ on the Representative List. The delegation thanked UNESCO for its support in the inscription process through its the Sub-regional Office in Yaoundé and the UNESCO Office in Kinshasa. It hoped for an expanded inscription of this element with Angola in the near future, which had just ratified the Convention. The delegation congratulated UNESCO on the launch of the MOOC on living heritage and sustainable development, which contributes to capacity-building through the use of information and communication technologies, together with the international capacity-building programme and the global network of facilitators. The delegation supported truly global institutional capacity-building, beyond human capacity-building. It endorsed the draft decision.
34. The delegation of **Algeria** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau. This ninth session marked the return of face-to-face meetings and it was an opportunity to thank and congratulate Jamaica and Sri Lanka for the quality of the sessions organized under the conditions of the pandemic. The delegation also congratulated and welcomed Somalia and Angola, two African States, thereby increasing Africa’s presence within the Convention, in line with UNESCO's Priority Africa. The delegation was certain Africa’s presence will be strengthened by these new States because Africa can considerably increase the world’s intangible cultural heritage and, at the same, Africa is the continent that expects the most from this Convention. Finally, in this ninthsession, the delegation recalled that 5 July corresponds to the 60th anniversary of the independence of Algeria after a long and bitter struggle for freedom.
35. The delegation of **Mali** expressed congratulations to the Chairperson and the Bureau Members on their election as well as the Secretariat for the preparation of the documentation for this ninth session, and Angola and Somalia for having joined the Convention. Mali was delighted with the immense support provided by the Committee for the emergency inscription of ‘Cultural practices and expressions linked to ‘M’Bolon’, a traditional musical percussion instrument’ [on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2021], adding that intangible cultural heritage is vital for communities in Mali. Its 9 elements inscribed on the Lists attest to this. In June [2022], the Government of Mali instituted Cultural, Tangible and Intangible Heritage Days, which are to be celebrated every May. Prior to this, all of the country’s authorities recently met in central Mali to celebrate ‘Sanké mon’, one of the elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2009, which involves collective fishing dating back more than seven centuries. The delegation noted that these advances cannot hide the horrible truth that is being imposed on communities in the centre of the country where a large part of intangible cultural heritage continues to be threatened due to the abandonment of villages and communities under the pressure of terrorist groups. In 2027, the release of the masks will be celebrated in Dogon country, a celebration that takes place every 60 years. The last celebration took place in 1967 in the presence of Marcel Griaule [a French anthropologist] and it is precisely in this area where insecurity is rife. Hence, the urgent appeal for even more dynamism and support from UNESCO and all its stakeholders. In view of this situation, Mali wishes to join the Committee from 2023 to further convey the message of new threats hanging over cultural heritage in Mali and elsewhere.
36. The delegation of **India** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for organizing this ninth session of the General Assembly. India welcomed Angola and Somalia to the Convention. It also thanked Sri Lanka for its valuable contribution in its chairing of the Committee in the challenging times of the pandemic. India marches into the seventy-fifth year of its independence in 2022 and its celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a national commemoration of the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements. With over 5,000 years of civilization, the diverse expressions of intangible culture are represented through ideas, practices, beliefs, indigenous knowledge systems and values shared by its myriad communities. The delegation reiterated India’s continued commitment to the Convention and to the cultural continuity of societies and its transmission to future generations. At the national level, India has a strong mechanism in place to sustain and safeguard heritage by regularly facilitating the democratic participation of all stakeholders. Under its national scheme to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and the diverse cultural traditions of India, it had undertaken over 300 research projects spearheaded by cultural experts, academicians and local practitioners. Between 2016 and 2022, India has signed over 50 bilateral culture agreements covering various aspects of culture, transmission and safeguarding. The delegation looked forward to working with other States Parties and contributing to strengthening and evolving the Convention in a meaningful way.
37. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** took the floor to respond to the statement made by Armenia, which the Delegation believed was a failed attempt to deviate the attention of the international community from the aggravated facts of cultural crimes committed by Armenia in the previously occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The delegation noted that a thousand cultural and religious properties of Azerbaijan situated in the liberated territories were completely destroyed and razed to the ground by Armenia and said that Armenia also destroyed the cultural heritage of Azerbaijani people in Armenia with the aim to erase the traces of Azerbaijani people living in these territories for centuries. The delegation reminded Armenia that due to the occupation of internationally recognized Azerbaijan territories, one million refugees had been deprived of exercising their basic rights, including their intangible cultural heritage rights for almost thirty years. The delegation noted that Azerbaijan repeatedly stated that historical and religious monuments located in the liberated territories constitute part of the Azerbaijani heritage, thereby falling under the protection and responsibility of the Azerbaijani State. It noted that Azerbaijan does not discriminate its historical and cultural heritage based on its religious and ethnic background and is committed to its obligations under international conventions including those of UNESCO. The delegation advised Armenia to accept the new realities on the ground and focus on the prospects for regional peace and cooperation based on respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty, adding that there is no such territorial unit as Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, only the regions of Karabakh and Eastern Zangezur. The goal of peaceful and sustainable development cannot be achieved by replicating false narratives, misinterpreting international law and pursuing the policy of hatred, animosity and territorial claims.
38. The delegation of **Haiti** thanked all the States Parties that had spoken to express their support for Joumou soup, congratulating the Chairperson on her election. On behalf of the Republic of Haiti and the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, the delegation expressed great and profound gratitude to the Members of the Committee for their diligent work during the last session and their decision to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List. It also thanked the Evaluation Body for its favourable technical recommendation and for having congratulated Haiti for having put together an exemplary candidature for its first submission, which met all five criteria for inscription. The delegation also renewed its gratitude towards all UNESCO Member States and friends of Haiti for their unequivocal solidarity, as well as the Secretariat for its support of this historic inscription. Joumou soup belongs to the entire Haitian country, the bearers and guardians of this heritage, which is woven into its DNA. Joumou soup is the ultimate symbol of the fight against slavery, colonialism and racism. This heritage is precious to all formerly colonized peoples. Thanks to this symbol, Haitians today, young and old, wherever they are, can know that their contribution to the history of the world, their voice and dignity, will never again be invisible. This inscription is a glimmer of hope in this dark moment of its journey as a people during these challenging times; the only symbol capable of rekindling a new torch, a new spirit of solidarity and faith in a better tomorrow. Haiti thanked UNESCO and the General Assembly.
39. The **Chairperson** congratulated Haiti, and with no more requests for the floor, turned to the draft resolution. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 5 adopted**.

**ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2021)**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/6*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-6-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 6*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/6)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** presented the Secretariat’s activities during the period from January 2020 to December 2021. As shown in the working document, the Secretariat had made progress in many areas that are important to the life of the Convention despite some of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in detail in the working document. Focusing on the key points, Mr Ottone began with the Secretariat’s COVID-19 response, which shaped much of its work over the reporting period. He was happy to report that the Convention was largely able to continue its statutory operations uninterrupted during this period. This showed the ability of the Convention’s mechanisms to withstand change and its capacity to adapt to more flexible working modalities. The Secretariat had undertaken a survey and published a report, *Living Heritage in the Face of COVID-19* in 2021. Based on the recommendations therein, UNESCO came up with follow-up activities in eight countries, demonstrating the role of living heritage to ‘build back better’[[12]](#footnote-12). Promising results were achieved in terms of the Convention’s International Assistance mechanism in the period concerned. Expenditures linked to International Assistance reached US$2.2 million with particular attention given to Africa and SIDS. Nine States Parties were granted assistance for the very first time, which points to a steady expansion of the geographical reach of this mechanism, as these States represent 56% of requests granted during the reporting period. The Secretariat also undertook a number of measures to stimulate the use of the International Assistance mechanism by States Parties, including a dedicated video and toolkit[[13]](#footnote-13) for requesting International Assistance. A side event had been organized during the Assembly to present the toolkit. A significant achievement of the reporting period was the progress made on the reflection of the global listing mechanisms. During the last two years, extensive consultations had been undertaken, culminating in the present session where the Assembly would be asked to approve revisions to the Operational Directives (under item 9), which will conclude the global reflection process first initiated at the twelfth session of the Committee in 2017 and generously supported by the Government of Japan.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** spoke of another important reform, the periodic reporting system, which had already revealed some promising results. During the reporting period the submission rate among States Parties in the first reporting region showed a marked improvement of 87.5% for Latin America and the Caribbean and 95.4% for Europe. This was an extremely positive development, which points to the success of these reforms to strengthen the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention at all levels. The implementation of the reform periodic reporting system was already greatly facilitated by the Convention’s global capacity-building programme, which is in its eleventh year of implementation and continues to grow and evolve according to stakeholders needs. Capacity-building for periodic reporting was generously supported by partners such as Category 2 centres[[14]](#footnote-14) under the auspices of UNESCO. With the COVID-19 context, the programme acquired valuable experience in online learning. The Secretariat has built on the lessons learnt with regard to the strategic reorientation of the ongoing programme to incorporate delivery approaches that combine in-person, hybrid and fully online modalities, while building on an interactive platform. One example is the first massive open online course (MOOC) on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development[[15]](#footnote-15). An exhibition of the MOOC course had been organized during the Assembly. This MOOC was developed by UNESCO in collaboration with the International Information and Networking Centre in Asia and the Pacific under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP) and the SDG Academy. The course and exhibition were produced with the generous support of the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea. [A short video was played presenting the exhibition]. In the past two years, the global capacity-building programme has further broadened its thematic area of expertise into new areas, such as intangible cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction. A new approach was developed and is now under implementation in five SIDS, bringing together cultural practitioners, policy-makers and disaster risk reduction specialists. With a strong demand for capacity-building from all parts of the world, Mr Ottone was pleased to announce that the Secretariat is launching an open call to expand the global network of facilitators[[16]](#footnote-16), a resource which has been key to the success of the programme over the years.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** then spoke about the second funding priority under the Convention: the programme on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education, which had also made significant progress over the past two years. Since its launch in 2018, this programme had progressed, with projects and activities implemented in more than 50 countries. The IOS evaluation had taken note of its achievements in raising awareness and respect for living heritage among young people and the wider community. The programme is based on close collaboration with the education sector and it will be crucial to strengthening this cross-sectoral work as the Secretariat will scale up the programme for greater impact. The Secretariat also continues to address the challenges of sustainable development by promoting integrative approaches, which appreciate the role of culture, including intangible cultural heritage, for sustainable and resilient societies. In this regard, Mr Ottone was pleased to announce that the Secretariat will extend its work to emerging thematic areas, where the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage can make a particularly valuable contribution. These areas are intangible cultural heritage and climate change, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, and the relationship between safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and commercialization. This demonstrates the ever-evolving nature of the Convention nearly twenty years after it entered into force. A major evaluation was undertaken last year by UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS) on the relevance and effectiveness of UNESCO's action under the 2003 Convention. The evaluation revealed that, as the second youngest culture Convention, it was one of the most successful, not least because it succeeded in raising awareness about the distinct nature and importance of living heritage. However, it also showed that the Convention was faced with increasing demands owing to the high number of statutory requests, placing even greater pressure on the Secretariat. In this regard, the evaluation recommended establishing priorities for the use of the limited resources of the Secretariat, which is very important to take into account. It was time to take stock of the Convention’s achievements to date and reflect on its priorities for the future so that it can continue to grow and meet the needs of its States Parties and stakeholders for the effective safeguarding of living heritage on a global scale.
4. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled some of the most noteworthy achievements of this reporting period. The Secretariat: i) organized 20 statutory meetings for the General Assembly, the Committee, the Bureau and the Evaluation Body; ii) launched a consultation among 200 experts, held three expert meetings with 34 participants and three sessions of the Open-ended intergovernmental meetings (with the participation of 97 countries) to propose adjustments to the listing mechanisms; iii) implemented the first regional cycle of periodic reporting in two regions; iv) received and analysed 28 reports in Latin America and 43 reports out of the 44 expected from the European region; v) trained 78 national focal points for periodic reporting across two regions; vi) treated 34 International Assistance requests, of which 16 were approved during the biennium; vii) adopted operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies; viii) strengthened collaboration with the ICH NGO Forum; ix) processed 46 new accreditation requests; x) provided capacity-building support to 162 Member States, including 33 in Africa and 30 in SIDS; xi) trained 83 members of the facilitators network of which more than half were women; xii) engaged 140 universities in networking activities for intangible cultural heritage across four regions; and xiii) launched a clearinghouse for knowledge-sharing on intangible cultural heritage and education. This provided a snapshot of the extent and scope of the Secretariat’s work in the past two years and everything it had achieved in the evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked Mr Ottone for the insightful presentation, adding that the discussion would continue after lunch. The morning session was adjourned.

*[Tuesday, 5 July, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

**REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2021)**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations back to the afternoon session, noting the good progress. The Assembly would continue with item 6 and examination of the Report by the Secretariat on its activities.
2. The delegation of **Estonia** thanked the Secretariat for the detailed overview of the wide array of activities that the Committee and the Secretariat had undertaken during the reporting period in supporting States in the implementation of the Convention. The past two years had been characterized not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but also by the successful global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention and the first results of the ambitious periodic reporting reform. Estonia highlighted the valuable work done in capacity-building and the new thematic fields such as intangible cultural heritage and climate change, intangible cultural heritage and commercialization and living heritage in urban contexts. The new tool ‘Dive into living heritage!’[[17]](#footnote-17) and sustainable development and the first MOOC on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development successfully demonstrated the wide-ranging interlinkages between living heritage and sustainable development. The report also clearly showed the rise in statutory demands, yet the Secretariat’s budget and staffing situation have not followed, meaning that the Secretariat is unable to adequately respond to all requests, as pointed out by the recent IOS evaluation. The IOS thus recommended to establish priorities for the use of the Secretariat’s limited resources. It was now up to the States Parties to guide the Secretariat on where the priorities lie. Estonia had participated in the Open-ended working group on the global reflection of the listing mechanisms under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Japan. It saw how much time, negotiation and considerations were involved in the revisions to the Operational Directives that were being presented to the Assembly for adoption. These are sound and constructive proposals that the delegation hoped would be adopted in their entirety. The periodic reporting reform had also shown a high rate of submissions. One of the secrets of this success had been the comprehensive online training course offered by the Secretariat, allowing the focal points to foster very strong peer-to-peer exchanges and learning among themselves. However, the reporting form in its current state remained quite challenging and the process extremely time consuming. In order to facilitate meaningful engagement of practitioners the language used in the form needs to be less bureaucratic and abstract. The form would thus benefit from revisions for the next reporting cycle as this would strengthen the real impact of this process in terms of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The delegation also saw potential in strengthening engagement with partners, such as accredited NGOs, UNESCO Chairs and Category 2 centres, whose important work would contribute to the Secretariat’s capacity-building programme in research, safeguarding projects on the ground as well as periodic reporting. The IOS report found that these partners are currently underutilized and their work is not sufficiently visible. Thus, further reflection on how to strengthen collaboration with these important partners should continue.
3. The delegation of **Lithuania** thanked the Secretariat for the substantial support provided to the work of the governing bodies and for all the communication carried out during the reporting period. The work carried out during the meetings of the Open-ended working group on the listing mechanisms was of great importance, which could only take place thanks to the efforts, professionalism and support of the Secretariat and the generous support of the Government of Japan. The delegation greatly appreciated the many activities undertaken by the Secretariat in support of States Parties that had participated in two cycles of periodic reporting following the reform, including training courses, which considerably improved the rate of submission of reports. Lithuania had submitted its third report in 2021, having ratified the Convention in 2004, which admittedly required a lot of effort and resources, possibly even excessively so at the national level. It was noted that some questions in the form were perhaps too declarative or formal, even though they may be considered important topics for reflection, while the evaluation of the data against the indicators was rather relative or even subjective. The delegation believed that the form and its questions could be simplified in the future, and that a reflection on this issue could be useful.
4. The delegation of **Lithuania** raised the second point on the question of terminology, specifically the use of ‘focal points’. This term is encountered in the context of other Conventions, however, it is not mentioned either in the text of the 2003 Convention nor its Operational Directives. It has only appeared in the recent years and there appeared to be uncertainty in its use because it is written in quotation marks in the working documents. It would therefore be useful to define the terms that appear in the scope of the Convention so as to really understand what responsibilities are implied by this term, which could be part of the Operational Directives. The importance of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 was emphasized. Convened in September, it raised very relevant issues, including on heritage and creativity in times of crisis. It was hoped that the skills and resources of the Secretariat and the Living Heritage Entity have been or will be deployed in the implementation of this very important event, as the safeguarding of intangible heritage represents a very important field of cultural policy. As this was not really reflected in the Secretariat’s report, the delegation asked the Secretariat for some information on its contribution to the MONDIACULT Conference. In general, the number of working documents prepared by the Secretariat was impressive. The delegation welcomed several of the actions and documents produced during the reporting period, particularly concerning support for the International Assistance mechanism, synergies with other culture Conventions, activities related to the integration of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education, as well as the contributions of living heritage to sustainable development, among many others. It welcomed the draft resolution and thanked the Secretariat for its tremendous work, which it hoped will continue.
5. The delegation of **Japan** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and commended the Secretariat and the Committee for its work during the period 2020-2022, welcoming Angola and Somalia as new members of the Convention. It was indeed moving to think that 2023 will mark the twentieth anniversary of this important Convention. During these 20 years, the Convention has developed into a very tangible, visible Convention now embracing 180 States Parties. This is a great achievement. The delegation believed that capacity-building is very important for the protection of intangible cultural heritage and it thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in this area. Japan also appreciated the close sectoral collaboration with the Education Sector to promote intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education, as well as its efforts on intangible cultural heritage and climate change, another important topic for Japan. Japan had supported the Open-ended working group on the listing mechanisms and it was a great personal honour for the Ambassador to chair the meeting. Japan completed its term as a Committee Member but will continue to be actively involved in the Committee as it looked forward to fruitful discussions at this session.
6. The delegation of **Finland** thanked the Secretariat for the organization of this meeting and also the Secretariat and the Committee for the good work accomplished in recent years despite the challenging circumstances. At the same time, new ways of working together, mainly online, had been introduced and the Secretariat had reacted quickly to the pandemic and introduced digital tools that will enhance the Convention’s work in the future. These new possibilities make the world smaller and help boost the implementation of the Convention on many levels. The delegation was thankful for the Secretariat’s extensive report, which revealed its versatile and far-reaching work. It also highlighted its important role in supporting the implementation of the Convention, and the delegation especially appreciated the work done on the periodic reporting. The impressive results and rates of submission, close to 90%, clearly showed that the new system of periodic reporting is functioning. Focal points had been extensive and challenging, but also rewarding in many ways, helping States Parties better understand the demands of the Convention and the actions necessary for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage effectively. The training on periodic reporting was successfully organized, even during the pandemic, and brought focal points closer together. One proof of this is the European network of focal points for the Convention established in 2021 on the initiative of Italy and Finland, and which now connects colleagues throughout Europe.
7. The delegation of **Finland** also took note of the work done on thematic initiatives, highlighting the contributions to the issue of living heritage and sustainable development. This work is urgent and all States Parties needed to act now. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda and the building of a sustainable future should be at the core of all efforts, for which Member States need tools, guidance and good practices. The delegation sought to hear more about the concept notes being prepared by the Secretariat on intangible cultural heritage and climate change, economic dimensions and urban contexts, and also on its plans regarding MONDIACULT. It was also thankful for the work of the MOOC focusing on sustainability. Currently, Finland is working on the three-year project, ‘LIVIND, Creative and living cultural heritage as a resource for the Northern Dimension region’[[18]](#footnote-18), which brings together nine countries in the Nordic region, the results of which will be shared globally. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its work on communications and outreach. One common goal for States Parties in its region in 2023 is to highlight the ‘European Heritage Days’[[19]](#footnote-19) on the theme, ‘Living Heritage’, by the Council of Europe. This is one concrete way to elevate intangible cultural heritage on the European agenda and create synergies. The delegation concluded by highlighting the efforts by accredited NGOs and the ICH NGO Forum to support the implementation of the Convention, and it very much welcomed the ongoing reflection on their role and how they can participate in the mechanisms of the Convention.
8. The delegation of **France** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and the Members of the Bureau. It thanked both the Secretariat and the Committee for their reports covering the 2020–2021 biennium. France attaches great importance to the Convention, which materialized in a voluntary contribution of €100,000 in 2022. The national State services and the Ministry of Culture, in particular, are strongly committed to the Convention. A Committee of Ethnological and Intangible Heritage[[20]](#footnote-20) was established – the French counterpart to UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee – in which French civil society is involved, sharing its expertise in the domain of living heritage. This committee is thus involved in implementing and leading France’s policy in the field of ethnological and intangible heritage. Furthermore, the safeguarding of living heritage is arousing growing interest at the national level, as evidenced by the publication of a report on the subject by the Senate in May 2021. This report constitutes an overview of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as the Convention approaches its twentieth anniversary, and includes 25 proposals. This will in part be followed by the French Ministry of Culture within its mandate. Another example of this commitment to intangible heritage is the project led by the UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development, which consists of an inventory of the intangible heritage of Ukrainian refugees in France. This study will examine the effects that forced displacement in an emergency context can have on the transmission of intangible heritage and its functions. Finally, France agreed with the remarks on the complexity of the regional and national reporting forms.
9. The **Chairperson** invited the Assistant Director-General to respond to some of the point raised.
10. On behalf of the Secretariat, the **Assistant Director-General** began bythanking the delegations for their kind words, congratulating them on the work undertaken, particularly given the difficulties faced over the last two years. Indeed, the Secretariat had to adapt to the new realities and the different ways of working, as did everyone, starting with the capacity-building programme and the switch to an online modality. He thanked the delegations for the support and inputs received. He also took note of the concerns raised regarding the form, recalling that the issue had indeed been raised at the Committee meeting in December 2021. The Assistant Director-General believed that discussions would take place that will allow for improvements in the forms in future versions. Regarding the issue raised by Finland, more specifically on the new emerging thematic areas of climate change, the role of NGOs and so on, the Secretariat was indeed initiating discussions on these issues, which was moving forward hand-in-hand with other activities and other culture Conventions, such as the World Heritage Convention, but also in more cross-cutting ways with other Sectors and entities in UNESCO. For example, on climate change, the Secretariat was working alongside the Education and Science sectors. As concerns MONDIACULT, the Assistant-Director General noted that The four major thematic areas of the conference were conceived through regional consultations.
11. The **Assistant Director-General** further explained that this cross-cutting work within the framework of the Culture Sector is how the work of UNESCO is usually conducted. On the question of accredited NGOs, Category 2 centres and UNESCO Chairs, the Assistant Director-General had no doubts on the need for these entities, working under the auspices of UNESCO, to work more closely together, which he had heard many times over the last four years, not only in this forum but in other areas work. The Secretariat concurred with the delegations that had raised this concern and he shared their observations, as also recommended by IOS in its evaluation on the importance of prioritizing work. The Assistant Director-General thanked the delegations for their comments, noting the many initiatives undertaken during the past two years, which had proved to be a very intense period. As for the Secretariat, it had deployed great efforts, and the Assistant Director-General was happy to hear the many delegations expressing their appreciation of the results.
12. The delegation of **Italy** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and the other Members of the Bureau, offering its full support. It believed that intangible cultural heritage is an important factor for cultural diversity and that knowledge of the cultural heritage of different communities is vital for intercultural dialogue and mutual respect. This is especially true in crisis situations. The reporting period had been unique and extraordinary, but UNESCO had deployed immense efforts to respond quickly and effectively to the situation in all areas of its competence. Faced with these challenges – from the health crisis to the ongoing conflicts in several countries – the Convention had once again demonstrated its great value and relevance. In this regard, Italy aligned with earlier remarks concerning the recent inscription of Ukrainian borscht on the List of intangible heritage, expressing its full support to Ukraine, while emphasizing the need to protect the intangible cultural heritage of countries in these moments of crisis. The Secretariat’s report identified many points that the delegation considered very important for the future implementation of the Convention, including: i) the reform of periodic reports; ii) the role of civil society in the implementation of the Convention; iii) capacity-building measures; iv) the importance of links between living heritage and sustainable development; v) the role of education; and vi) the role of youth. In this context, Italy attached great importance to the reflection on new mechanisms of inscription, which gave rise to the adoption of a new text drafted during the extraordinary session of the Committee on 1 July, on which this Assembly would pronounce. Italy also associated itself with Finland with regard to the European Network of Focal Points, which constitutes the first network of focal points for the Convention for Group I and II countries, and which would meet the following day for the first time face-to-face. The objective of this project is to contribute to the implementation of the Convention by encouraging regional dialogue and intercultural cooperation and by identifying synergies and joint initiatives. It was hoped that this initiative will also attract other interested groups and the delegation thanked Finland for joining this initiative.
13. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** thanked the Secretariat for the excellent report and for ensuring the continuity of functions within the framework of the Convention. The Netherlands has always advocated for new thematic initiatives and it looked forward to several of the relevant new thematic initiatives, such as heritage in urban contexts and intangible cultural heritage and climate change. The delegation applauded the project, ‘Capacity-building for safeguarding living heritage during emergencies in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)’, which can yield important lessons for the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As the IOS evaluation pointed out, it is necessary to prioritize the use of the Secretariat’s limited resources. The Netherlands has always stressed the importance of capacity-building rather than focusing on the Lists, which it sees as an important means to safeguarding intangible heritage but not as a goal in itself. It was pleased with the toolkit on the International Assistance mechanism and it wondered how the Secretariat will bring this toolkit to the attention of the numerous communities and relevant organizations for whom this could be a useful tool. Indeed, the decrease in requests for this important instrument was a concern. The Netherlands supported the Secretariat on the follow-up to the important recommendations of the IOS evaluation.
14. The delegation of **Palestine** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, adding that she could rely on the support of the other elected Members of the Bureau. It thanked the Secretariat for its report and for all its endeavours over the reporting period, as well as the Committee for its report and the States Parties that had submitted their periodic reports. The delegationspoke of the Focal Point of the Convention who had prepared an intervention focusing, in particular, on emergency cases, including occupation, as in the case of Palestine. With regard to the Secretariat’s report, the delegation wished to link the operational activities, synergies and thematic issues, with capacity-building, which was mentioned in many of the interventions. In this regard, the delegation suggested to invite the focal points of other culture Conventions to regional workshops organized by the Secretariat in order to enhance the synergies between the culture Conventions of UNESCO, as was the case for periodic reporting in Africa, the Arab region and Latin America, for example. This suggestion had already been implemented by other Conventions, namely, the 1954 Hague Convention and its Second Protocol and the 1970 Convention. When they hold workshops, they invite and convene all the stakeholders of the culture Conventions, thereby enlarging the scope. The delegation thanked the Chairperson of the Open-ended working group and the group itself for the work on the listing mechanisms, noting that there were still ongoing discussions on criterion R.2. It appreciated that the Secretariat had worked hard to successfully simplify the nomination form. However, the delegation suggested that the Secretariat could enhance the form again and simplify the questions relating to this criterion. Lastly, the delegation noted that almost all the interventions after item 5 [on the Committee’s report] were national statements and it therefore suggested to include an agenda item specifically on ‘national statements’. If there is limited time, owing to a high number of speakers, the statements could be limited to two to four minutes accordingly.
15. The delegation of **Austria** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its dedicated work and excellent preparation of this meeting under extraordinary circumstances, appreciating the quality of the work while recognizing its great workload despite the COVID-19 situation. The Secretariat had ensured sound governance and included all the statutory mechanisms and key operational initiatives. The Convention has achieved nearly universal ratification and the delegation welcomed Angola and Somalia. This was a proud moment for the Convention on the eve of its twentieth anniversary, which had evolved immensely and will continue do so in the future. Austria is deeply committed to the values and principles of the Convention. Among the most prominent milestones of the past two years were the reform of the reporting system and the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. The success of the new reporting system is clearly reflected in the highest ever submission rate. The Latin America and Caribbean region and Europe have undergone comprehensive training courses and made considerable effort to ensure reporting of the highest quality. Indeed, the question was whether this quality could be assured with fewer procedures and less comprehensive questions, which could indeed facilitate the work for States Parties and the Secretariat. As regards the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, the delegation thanked the Japanese Government for its excellent and efficient coordination of this process. The topics discussed were crucial as they touched upon the core functions of the Convention. According to Article 1, the purpose of the Convention is to safeguard and ensure respect for intangible cultural heritage, raise awareness and provide for international cooperation and assistance. For Austria, the listing mechanism is just one tool for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at the international level. More important are the implementation activities like capacity-building, ongoing thematic initiatives like sustainable development, intangible cultural heritage and climate change and in urban contexts, or responses to emergency situations, among others. The delegation complemented the Secretariat for the excellent work, wishing the Secretary a speedy recovery.
16. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** commended the efforts of the Secretariat over the past two years despite the multiple challenges. It welcomed the functioning of the core mechanisms of the Convention’s governing bodies, operational activities and programmes, as well as the adjustments made to the statutory and operational activities in response to the pandemic. The delegation also welcomed the measures undertaken by the Secretariat in strengthening synergies between the 2003 Convention and other UNESCO culture Conventions, notably, with the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. It believed this that work should continue to be strengthened over the next two years. Azerbaijan took note of the Secretariat’s efficient work in implementing two periodic cycles in the regions of Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean, in the context of the reformed periodic reporting mechanism. This work needs to be continued as Arab States, Africa and Asia and the Pacific embark on this exercise. The delegation highlighted the implementation of the programme in the field of intangible cultural heritage and education, and it called for greater synergies and collaboration with specific programmes of the UNESCO Education Sector, such as technical and vocational education and training, education for sustainable development, and education in emergencies. In this regard, it asked whether training support could also be operationalized in such areas as intangible cultural heritage and climate change as well as commercialization and intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, which represents a growing challenge. Azerbaijan reiterated the value of having a strong role and place for intangible cultural heritage in cultural policies, inviting the Secretariat to further reflect on possible ways of supporting Member States in the integration of intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development programmes and policies, and especially the ongoing preparations of the MONDIACULT conference.
17. The delegation of **Malaysia** commended the dedication and enormous efforts undertaken by the Secretariat despite the challenging times of the pandemic. The debates during the Open-ended working group, under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Japan, paved the way for a better understanding and clarity in dealing with the issues arising from the Convention. In this regard, Malaysia welcomed the approved operational principles and modalities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage during emergencies. Malaysia was revising the mechanisms to adopt and adapt the operational principles and modalities. The reform of the periodic reporting greatly facilitated States Parties’ reporting, and the delegation hoped to see more submissions in the future. The online reporting will also allow States Parties to better share their activities and achievements held in different regions as the Convention gained greater traction. Despite the limited resources, Malaysia hoped that priority would be given to strengthening capacity-building programmes, outreach and development plans focusing on the effects of climate change. It was also hopeful of the ongoing global reflection on the listing mechanisms and looked forward to a positive outcome, which will indeed be another milestone. Malaysia highlighted the need to enhance the collaboration of UNESCO Category 2 centres across regions in promoting the programmes and activities under the Convention.
18. The delegation of **Armenia** thanked the Secretariat for its report and for fulfilling its mission under the difficult context of the pandemic. It expressed appreciation for the overall reflection on the listing mechanisms and welcomed the work carried out within the framework of the various expert meetings. The delegation welcomed the positive effects of the periodic reporting reform, noting the increase in submission rates. It also noted the strong commitment of the Secretariat with regard to the Evaluation Body, particularly in the examination of nominations. With regard to cooperation with NGOs, the delegation has always appreciated the role played by accredited NGOs in the protection of living heritage. It welcomed the operational nature of the cooperation with the NGO Forum with the aim of specifying how accredited NGOs can best fulfil their advisory functions to the Committee. The delegation also welcomed the initiatives taken in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations, particularly within the framework of synergies with other culture Conventions, adding that this heritage could be found in certain extremely vulnerable cases, particularly in conflict situations. Armenia had expressed concerns regarding Armenian intangible cultural heritage in the Azerbaijani-occupied territories of Nagorno-Karabakh. The delegation noted that the Armenian populations living in the regions of Hadrut and Shushi were expelled from these territories during the aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh in autumn 2020. As a result, the delegation indicated that they were deprived of social, cultural and economic life, with serious threats weighing on their intangible cultural heritage. This coincides with the destruction of Armenian cultural property located on these same territories. The delegation concluded by noting that to date, the Azerbaijani authorities continue to refuse free access to these sites to UNESCO experts, preventing an independent technical mission on the ground and therefore the entire Armenian cultural heritage of these territories was in danger today.
19. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretariat to respond to the questions and matters raised.
20. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** thanked the delegations on behalf of the Secretary, Mr Tim Curtis, who was following this meeting online, for their encouragement and kind words, and whose feedback is extremely important. On the periodic reporting, Ms Ohinata agreed on the importance of feedback, particularly from the European region and Latin America and the Caribbean as these two regions had undertaken the exercise for the first time. Concerning the form, she explained that it may appear strict, rather cumbersome and technical because it had been strictly and closely aligned to the overall results framework with its assessment factors and indicators. This was the starting point and the reason the form faithfully respected what the Secretariat considered to be a very innovative, forward-looking monitoring tool that allows the Secretariat to measure the impact of the implementation of the Convention at different levels. Now that two regions had undertaken the periodic reporting exercise for the first time, the Secretariat will learn from this experience to try and make the form user-friendly, disseminating the analysis to different regions and enhancing the capacity approach. With regard to the focal points, Ms Ohinata explained that the term was being used in its strict sense for periodic reporting purposes and to make a distinction with the general terminology, such as national points of contact, used in the fundamental texts of sister Conventions like the 2005 Convention. Indeed, it had been very useful for the Secretariat to be able to work with national focal points. For this reason, it very much appreciated the initiative of some European countries, such as Finland and Italy, that had created and supported the network of country focal points on periodic reporting. Ms Ohinata also took note of some concerns regarding International Assistance. She referred to the side events and the information sessions on the toolkit for example. The Secretariat had also convened an information meeting in all the regions and will be approaching National Commissions for further dissemination. The Secretariat encouraged all States Parties to make use of this mechanism available under the Convention. On the question from Palestine regarding criterion R.2 in particular, the Secretariat hoped that the global reflection on the listing mechanism would conclude under item 9, recalling that the Committee had wished to maintain all the criteria for the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List. With the exception of one criterion for the Register of Good Practices, most of the criteria were maintained but with a request to simplify criterion R.2 to make it more understandable, particularly for the communities. The Secretariat will start on that exercise following the decision by the General Assembly so that the new form will be simplified and much easier to use, after which it will be made available in late 2022 or early 2023 for the 2024 cycle. On the question by Azerbaijan on the possibility of undertaking training on the thematic initiatives, Ms Ohinata agreed that this was something that the Secretariat would very much like to do, depending on funding possibilities. But its focus in the first instance was to get the approach right because these themes (intangible cultural heritage and climate change, intangible cultural heritage and commercialization and intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts) are new areas of work. As was the case for the work on the operational principles and modalities for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in emergency contexts, the Secretariat will be working with experts and open-ended working groups so as to understand the issues and find the pertinent approaches before providing training on these topics.
21. The delegation of **Latvia** expressed its full support to the Secretariat and the prioritization of its workload so as to ensure the quality of its work, while attentive to the implementation of the Convention. It particularly welcomed the capacity-building provided by the Secretariat. The delegation highlighted the diligent and effective support that accompanied the national reporting, adding that reporting mechanisms are crucial for a truly sustainable safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, including the maintenance of inscribed elements. The massive online open course (MOOC) of living heritage and sustainable development was also an inspiring example of fruitful partnership with UNESCO Chairs who are active in this field. Latvia expressed support for their active involvement, not only in the MOOC but also in the implementation of the Convention, recognizing the need to raise visibility of their contribution to education and research on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The delegation also hoped that raising the visibility of the work of UNESCO Chairs would contribute to enlarging their network to all regional groups. It also believed that the capacity-building strategy of UNESCO is highly important as it impacted on the activities of States Parties in elaborating national policies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
22. The delegation of **Colombia** thanked the Secretariat for its very complete report presenting its activities over the past two years with all its challenges, which has strengthened the governance of the Convention and brought communities from around the world closer together. The delegation aligned with the remarks made by other delegations, particularly with regard to the Open-ended working group, which had set out recommendations on the listing mechanisms, to commend Ambassador Oike for the excellent conduct of the work. In addition, during this period, the tools made available on the platform [‘Living heritage experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic’] for the various communities concerned facilitated the exchange of experiences and proved to be very successful during the pandemic in helping to adapt safeguarding measures. In Colombia, all the participants were extremely grateful for having been able to connect and engage in discussions through this platform. The delegation hoped that this model will enable States Parties to continue engaging in dialogue on best practices, further advancing the work of the working group. Regarding emergency situations and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, the delegation believed that States Parties need to be far closer to the stakeholders in order to share their safeguarding experience. Indeed, channels could be established so as to become better acquainted with the safeguarding context. This would facilitate the implementation of Article 15 of the Convention [on the participation of communities] for shared decision-making together with the bearers of intangible heritage. This would help in better understanding the resilience of communities and their capacity to understand safeguarding strategies and ensure that public policies implemented by Member States and the different actors are complementary and better supported and understood by local actors. This would improve mutual understanding, which was demonstrated during the pandemic. Lastly, it sought to know how States Parties could better promote the good initiatives set out in the report, particularly the MOOC. The delegation wished to know more about the MOOC, for example, *how many people participated in the MOOC?* *How can we ensure that it is better known?* The delegation agreed that the forms for requesting International Assistance could be improved, noting that a side event on this topic would be held the following day. It also noted the possibilities of establishing links between culture Conventions, adding that it wished to continue working on these synergies.
23. The delegation of **Cyprus** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the Members of the Bureau. It commended the Secretariat for the activities implemented despite the challenges posed to living heritage by the pandemic. From its perspective, the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, the capacity-building initiatives, the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, and the strengthening of synergies between living heritage, education and sustainable development are all essential steps in the right direction for the implementation of the Convention in its twentieth year. In 2021, Cyprus organized an online capacity-building workshop with the Category 2 centre in Sofia[[21]](#footnote-21) and UNESCO ICH facilitators, thus exploiting the potential of synergies among different stakeholders at regional, national and international levels. Drawing from this experience, the delegation highlighted the importance of empowering communities to develop their own safeguarding plans for living heritage with respect to ethical principles and sustainable development. The delegation commended the Secretariat for the very useful tools developed for the Convention, which Cyprus had used extensively in its workshop. Additionally, with its involvement in the Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage: Resources for Teachers[[22]](#footnote-22) programme implemented in close collaboration with UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), the delegation remarked on the huge potential for awareness-raising through education and through intersectoral collaboration generally. The projects implemented have increased awareness of living heritage and motivated schools in Cyprus to develop partnerships and explore innovative ways to interact with bearers and communities, even beyond the duration of the programme. The delegation looked forward to the future results of the holistic approach to safeguarding living heritage and sustainable development initiated by the Secretariat. It hoped that the anniversary of the Convention in 2023 will provide an opportunity to identify synergies and further explore innovative ways to safeguard and live with intangible heritage.
24. The delegation of **China** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the Members of the Bureau and the Rapporteur. It was very happy to note the impact of the Convention with the number of States Parties continuing to grow, welcoming new members Angola and Somalia. China appreciated the efforts by the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat over the past two years in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by taking several remedial actions and adapting working modalities, including providing administrative, logistical and substantive support. The Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat ensured continuity in the work of the governing bodies and the statutory mechanisms. In particular, it facilitated the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which has made important progress. The delegation also commended them for their achievements in prioritizing operational areas of the Convention, including the support of 16 projects, through the International Assistance mechanism, as well as capacity-building interventions in 162 countries including 33 from Africa and 30 SIDS. China encouraged and supported the Secretariat in meeting the new demands and in exploring and testing various thematic areas including intangible cultural heritage in education, the contribution of living heritage to sustainable development, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts. China is ready to provide support to the Secretariat with its work and hoped that the Secretariat will integrate and consolidate all the educational resources of the important culture Conventions, including digital resources, so as to educate new generations and thus foster the spirit of safeguarding and protecting intangible cultural heritage.
25. The delegation of **Mexico** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau Members on their election. It thanked the Secretariat for its report and for its work, particularly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, as highlighted by the Assistant Director-General, commending the Secretariat for the online training. It was a very satisfactory tool that was easy to use, and it greatly appreciated the involvement of all the experts who took part, for example, Ms Cristina Amescua of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The delegation also commended the Open-ended working group for the progress made on the listing mechanisms. Regarding the presentation on periodic reporting, the delegation remarked that this was indeed a significant challenge for States Parties, particularly because of the restrictive health and safety measures, and the closure of universities and advisory organizations, making it more difficult to implement intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. However, Mexico will continue to fulfil its obligations under the Convention vis-à-vis the bearer communities to protect living heritage.
26. The delegation of **Mongolia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and the elected Members of the Bureau. It thanked the Secretariat for its work and their efforts over the past two years. Mongolia commended the good work in implementing the reformed periodic reporting mechanism, which had significantly improved reporting rates, as well as the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and capacity-building interventions implemented in Africa and SIDS. It also commended the extensive consultation process that took place over the past two years to improve the implementation of the Convention at all levels. Mongolia supported the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives and thanked all States Parties that had contributed towards moving this process forward. It especially commended the Ambassador of Japan for his support of the Open-ended working group. Furthermore, Mongolia appreciated the progress made with regard to the synergy between UNESCO’s culture Conventions and the implementation of projects and initiatives in this field. As a country harnessing innovative projects in the education and culture sector, Mongolia wished to share its experience and contribute to the exchange of information on living heritage and education developed by the Secretariat through its projects and initiatives.
27. The delegation of **Mongolia** thanked the Secretariat for its close cooperation in implementing the project ‘Folk long song performance technique of Limbe performances’, which was funded by the Fund. Despite the many challenges due to the pandemic, this project was fully implemented in 2022 and contributed to the viability of this important living heritage. Mongolia also commended the Secretariat for the use of various online platforms, such as the MOOC on living heritage and sustainable development, in partnership with the Republic of Korea. In this regard, it would like the Secretariat to continue its work aimed at involving higher education institutions in the implementation of the Convention so that they use UNESCO Chairs, UNITWIN[[23]](#footnote-23) networks and beyond. The Government of Mongolia attaches great importance to cultural heritage and has initiated a process of improving the legal environment in this regard, which has led to the submission of an amendment to the law on safeguarding cultural intangible cultural heritage for 2024. The working group has already started researching and consulting best practices from countries that have more experience in this area.
28. The delegation of **Norway** commended the Secretariat and the Committee for their excellent work. The last few years of the pandemic had been very challenging, but UNESCO had risen to the challenge. This is testament not only to the importance of the Convention but also to the dedication of the Secretariat and the governing bodies. Norway welcomed the increased number of nominations to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, which addresses the very core of the Convention but remains an underutilized resource, and hoped for a better balance between the listing mechanisms. It welcomed the substantial increase in submission rates for periodic reporting. Norway took part in the periodic reporting cycle of 2021 and found that the process led to new insights. However, reporting remains time-consuming and requires considerable levels of administrative resources. There is thus a potential to simplify the process and the potential to increase information-sharing among the different United Nations agencies. The financial situation of the Organization and the resources of the Secretariat remain a cause for concern. States Parties should limit the number of demands placed on the Secretariat. The delegation welcomed the evaluation carried out by IOS and its recommendations. It thanked all stakeholders involved in the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which deals with questions that are key to the continued viability and sustainability of the Convention. Norway reaffirmed its strong commitment to capacity development and a multistakeholder approach to the implementation of the Convention. The role of indigenous peoples is also of particular importance and Norway places high emphasis on this issue, as well as in the national implementation of the Convention. Norway hosts this year’s Nordic Council of Ministers and has taken the initiative to convene a Nordic Conference on the intangible cultural heritage of the Sámi indigenous people in close cooperation with the Sámi Parliament. It also highlighted the continued importance of UNESCO’s work with heritage in emergencies. The delegation concluded by underscoring the importance of the Convention’s links with the Sustainable Development Goals as well as increased synergies with the culture Conventions.
29. The delegation of **Sweden** congratulated the Chairperson and welcomed Angola and Somalia, thanking Sri Lanka and Jamaica for successfully hosting the recent Committee meetings. Sweden thanked the Secretariat for its elaborate, excellent and well-presented report and for the important results achieved. The Secretariat’s activities are cornerstones for the implementation of the Convention on a national as well as international level. The Living Heritage Entity had met all the challenges during these years: the recent pandemic, the extensive work of the reflection of the listing mechanisms, as well as the extraordinary number of requests. The delegation thanked the Secretariat and noted how the work had been carried out with limited resources. It is therefore important to prioritize work, and States Parties able to contribute with voluntary resources were called upon to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The delegation was happy to see how the work with the NGO Forum had developed within several important areas. The work undertaken is fully in line with the core of the Convention, for which it was thankful. The question of how to promote NGO participation was thus an important issue for the future of this Convention, and Sweden looked forward to further discussion on this topic for a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, a process that Sweden is pleased to finance.
30. The delegation of **Slovakia** congratulated the Chairperson and welcomed the Secretariat’s report as well as the activities undertaken during the very challenging circumstances of the pandemic. It appreciated the activities of all sectors, governments, capacity-building, education, communication and outreach. The delegation especially appreciated the support of the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body and, more specifically, the development of the new online monitoring interface which proved to be useful and continues to be used as part of the working methods of the Evaluation Body. It particularly welcomed the capacity-building and educational activities aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. Slovakia took part in a webinar coordinated with Czech colleagues on education and living heritage, ‘Teaching and learning with living heritage’ in October 2021. In the context of the war in Ukraine, the delegation underscored the importance of the role of the international community in helping people who have fled their communities to safeguard their traditions and living heritage. Slovakia was proud to be part of the UNESCO projects whose objectives are to identify community-based needs for the living heritage of communities, groups and individuals from Ukraine and displaced in Slovakia. All participating countries have indicated how cultural activities in times of crisis are a reservoir of resilient strategies. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for the intense and very useful special online education for the preparation of the periodic reports during the pandemic. Paradoxically, it brought many colleagues together and they were able to share their know-how more intensively. The preparation of its periodic report through the electronic tool helped to create a comprehensive picture of the status of and challenges in the implementation of the Convention within the country, and the results are now being used for intersectoral policy for sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage at the national level.
31. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and welcomed Angola and Somalia to the Convention. It thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report and was, once again, impressed by the quantity and quality of the work accomplished since 2020, and by the dedication of the Secretariat, despite the ever-increasing workload. The delegation believed that the global reflection on the listing mechanisms had been successfully carried out and represented an important step in the implementation of the Convention. It also welcomed the reform of the periodic reporting, thanks to which a marked improvement in the rate of submission had been observed. Although the reporting process is complex and requires consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, requiring human and financial resources, the delegation believed that it was a valuable tool for a more effective implementation of intangible cultural heritage in cultural policies and better monitoring of safeguarding practices.At the same time, the delegation recognized that the form is very complex and that it would be useful to simplify it as much as possible in the future. It also appreciated the measures taken to improve the rate of submission and requests for International Assistance, which have decreased following the pandemic, including the toolkit for this mechanism. The delegation expressed how important the Secretariat’s support had been for the successful implementation of the Convention and its programmes for the transmission of values, knowledge and manifestations of intangible cultural heritage at a time of health crisis. The Secretariat was able to manage these activities despite the difficulties, which is a reminder that the Secretariat was able to achieve these results despite limited human resources. States Parties can dream and plan many things, but without the work and support of the Secretariat, this Convention would not be able to deliver such results and there is still a lot of room for development. Hence, why it is important to join forces and set priorities for future work, and to provide financial contributions to strengthen the human resources of the Secretariat where possible.
32. The delegation of **Switzerland** congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the Secretariat for its rich and detailed report, which reflected the intense activity of the past two years, noting the ability of the Secretariat to anticipate and adapt to the pandemic. The statutory activities were thus able to continue thanks to the technical solutions implemented. Additionally, the excellent work by the Secretariat, in terms of content and the quality of documents as well as the management of online information, was particularly noted. Switzerland welcomed the continuation and strengthening of thematic activities. It highlighted in particular the projects concerning intangible heritage and sustainable development, the responses to living heritage in emergency situations, and education and living heritage. Collaborations and the synergies with other culture Conventions represented opportunities to tackle cross-cutting issues such as heritage at risk or the effects of climate change on cultural property. It was thus essential to provide the Secretariat with sufficient resources for these activities, which are at the heart of the Convention. As such, the reflection on the listing mechanisms and the proposed revisions should make it possible to lessen the burden of inscriptions and the work of the Secretariat. In this regard, care should be taken not to overload the Secretariat with additional tasks but rather to support it by increasing its resources and prioritizing their use.
33. The delegation of **Brazil** complimented the Secretariat for its invaluable response to the COVID-19 pandemic summarized in the report, ‘*Living Heritage in the Face of COVID-19*. It echoed the remarks made by cultural heritage professionals, social groups and communities concerning intangible cultural elements as a means of resilience in these times. In the past two years, culture has experienced strong social, economic impacts and thus safeguarding actions had to adapt differently to respond to the demands and challenges post-COVID-19. In this context, more than ever, the relationship between safeguarding and sustainability should be stressed, while the role of traditional, community and local knowledge and practices is recognized for ensuring the viability and diversity of culture of humanity. In this regard, an initiative in Brazil called ‘Cultural heritage #athome’ maintains a close connection to the results of the Secretariat’s report. The idea was to support its cultural actors with equipment and skills so that they can use technology to keep their expressions, knowledge and celebrations alive. This was also a way to maintain the economic aspect of intangible cultural heritage for local communities largely affected by the decline of tourism worldwide. The Convention has reached the age of maturity and is in very good health. Even the difficulties faced were the result of its success since the first negotiations, in which Brazil played an active part. Indeed, the most optimistic of delegations could not have foreseen such exponential growth and interest. The delegation also highlighted from the report the synergies with other culture Conventions. Recent discussions on so-called ‘memory sites’ is one good example. It appreciated the Secretariat’s exploration of transversal policies with the Secretariats of the other Conventions. Brazil was ready to contribute with good practices in this regard. Its Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage has 84 years of history and extensive experience in the areas of cultural and historical heritage, which it continues to share in the cultural forums of UNESCO.
34. The delegation of **Brazil** also considered the impact of climate change for the safeguarding of living heritage. In this regard, there is already a working group dealing with this issue under the 1972 Convention whose reflections raised in that forum could contribute to the issue. Indeed, UNESCO can contribute greatly to the international debate on this issue. For Brazil, the search for balance, both geographical and thematic, within the Convention have been major objectives. This means strengthening the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, with many more initiatives around the world deserving of this recognition and serving as exemplary cases of safeguarding and models of cultural sustainability and sustainable development. Brazil will continue contributing to the universality of the Convention to increase the exchange of experiences between communities and States Parties so as to lessen the geographical imbalances of the elements inscribed on the Lists. It was confident that the wide-ranging discussions on the different areas of the Convention will lead to the right decisions, and it looked forward to sharing its dedication and experiences.
35. The delegation ofthe **Philippines** acknowledged the crucial role played by the Secretariat, commending its work in implementing the capacity-building strategy and exploring the intersectoral nexus in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage during the pandemic. It expressed gratitude as the Philippines gained significantly and meaningfully from such efforts. This included the pilot joint capacity-building project on intangible cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction, a capacity-building training, piloted in the Philippines and Honduras[[24]](#footnote-24), where a model of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies was developed with the generous contribution of Switzerland to the Fund. In this project, local communities were able to share knowledge and raise awareness, and to strengthen their capacities to develop plans and policies for the institutionalization of intangible cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction management. At the international level, this joint initiative paved the way for collaboration among UNESCO Regional Offices and countries that benefit from sharing knowledge and best practices. The role of Regional Offices and Category 2 centres cannot be overemphasized in making the work successful, enriching and engaging at the grassroots level. The delegation looked forward to the continuation and replication of such effective initiatives implemented and facilitated by the Secretariat for the benefit of States Parties for long-term safeguarding of humanity’s diverse living heritage.
36. The delegation of **Kenya** congratulated the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur, as well as Somalia and Angola for joining the international community through their ratification of the Convention. It believed that cooperation and partnership will achieve greater safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of all peoples. Kenya has been and continues to be an active supporter of the Convention, as evidenced by the inscription of four elements inscribed on the Lists, as well as in terms of inventory-making and its management and efforts to raise awareness of its cultural heritage. Kenya thanked UNESCO for the generous International Assistance it had received and utilized in projects supporting the intangible cultural heritage of communities. Kenya also appreciated and congratulated the Secretariat for its work in steering the implementation of the Convention during the pandemic. Kenya appreciated the launch of the online living heritage experience with the aim of collecting experiences from communities on the impact of the pandemic on their living heritage and their role in helping communities cope with the crisis. Kenya has indeed benefitted enormously from the experiences shared and has since been able to assist communities to adapt to a more sustainable and inclusive path to recovery from the pandemic. Kenya applauded the efforts of the Secretariat to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in emergencies and the introduction of a dialogue process between the Evaluation Body and submitting States as part of the evaluation process, which has seen the highest number of multinational elements inscribed. This is testimony of the ability of living heritage to bring people together and to promote international cooperation, which was demonstrated by the inscription of ‘Joumou soup’ from Haiti on an exceptional fast track basis following the natural disaster that struck the country. This was indeed a move in the right direction as the world seeks to safeguard all its intangible cultural heritage, and in solidarity with the people of Haiti. Kenya welcomed all the reforms and transformations that have significantly strengthened the Organization’s support to Member States, partners and communities. It noted that the development of the Convention is a positive sign for the increased awareness of intangible cultural heritage in different arenas and which translated into an increased demand for UNESCO support to States Parties.
37. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the report and commended the Secretariat for assuring the continuation of its work despite the difficulties posed by the pandemic. It also commended the Secretariat for its continued support to national safeguarding efforts through the International Assistance mechanism, with particular attention granted to Africa and SIDS. Considering the fewer requests for International Assistance in 2022, which is likely linked to the pandemic, the delegation commended the Secretariat for focusing on identifying the challenges faced by States and communities in the preparation of requests. In this regard, it appreciated the toolkit developed for the International Assistance mechanism. The delegation noted and valued the capacity-building interventions that took place in 162 countries, including in Africa and SIDS, which both need special attention. It encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this area, including comprehensive online training courses for periodic reporting to accompany national reporting efforts and thus improve the submission rate. In addition, for SIDS, climate change is an urgent concern, including for the safeguarding of living heritage, which deserved more attention. Drawing on the lessons learned with online learning during the pandemic, the delegation appreciated the strategic reorientation of capacity-building to include multimodal delivery approaches to broaden access and delivery, notably, by using new technologies and the use of the first MOOC developed on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development. These procedures could and should be further developed and, in this regard, the delegation supported possible cooperation with the Communications and Information Sector, encouraging cooperation with other programme sectors of UNESCO with links to other Conventions, while keeping their own specificities. This includes the 1972 World Heritage Convention where concrete operational projects could be implemented in the field, for instance, by promoting living heritage and cultural tourism at World Heritage properties or inventorying intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts. The delegation also appreciated the collaboration with Category 2 centres, UNESCO Chairs, NGOs and universities, which should be strengthened. It commended the Secretariat for its support to the Open-ended working group and the global reflection on the listing mechanisms.
38. The **Chairperson** called for a short break before proceeding to the next speakers.
39. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked the Secretariat for the very good report and for ensuring the continuity of work during the challenging period of COVID-19. The report is comprehensive on governance, the implementation of operational priorities and capacity-building, as well as on communication and outreach activities. On governance, the delegation greatly appreciated the work being done under the stewardship of the Ambassador of Japan in the Open-ended working group on the listing mechanisms. It supported the simplification of the criteria to facilitate inscription, especially if this leads to more inclusive and representative lists. The delegation appreciated the International Assistance mechanism with a focus on Africa, with eight new projects initiated during the reporting period and 33 African countries having received support in terms of capacity-building. It also appreciated the online learning, the demand-based approach and the development of a clearinghouse, where knowledge sharing, cooperation and innovation were made possible. Ultimately, inscriptions and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage is what matters most. However, the report does not mention geographic balance. For example, the Annex of the report (page 10) outlines the new inscriptions, with 62 nomination files submitted in 2020, 74 files in 2021 and 59 files in the current 2022 cycle. But it does not state how many inscriptions resulted from the nominations nor how many were inscribed, for example, from Africa. The delegation sought to have a clear indication of the baseline so as to work towards changing the picture of actual inscriptions. The delegation also noted (on page 12 of the Annex) that four regional training of trainer workshops had been conducted, but there was no mention of Africa, wondering whether it was an oversight, and if not, why none had been conducted in Africa. Although satisfied with the activities undertaken during a very difficult period, the delegation was very concerned about the balance of inscriptions and the fact that Africa continues to lag behind.
40. The delegation of **Egypt** commended the Secretariat’s report on its activities over the past two years notwithstanding the pandemic. It commended all the initiatives and activities mentioned in the report, in particular, the efforts focused on Africa and SIDS. Furthermore, the delegation noted with satisfaction the initiative by the United Arab Emirates regarding the establishment of periodic reports. It emphasized the continued need to support Arab and African countries in the implementation of the Convention and to ensure the equal representation of all regions. It also commended efforts to work with other culture Conventions, in particular, the 1972 Convention. It is important that this work be continued so as to inscribe elements of intangible cultural heritage and thus strengthen the implementation of both Conventions, taking into account the specificities of each. Efforts to support States Parties must continue so as to place intangible cultural heritage at the core of their general policies.
41. The delegation of the **United Arab Emirates** congratulated theChairperson on her election, extending gratitude to the Secretariatfor its efforts in ensuringcontinuity of the work during the pandemic. The UAE has worked closely with UNESCO on multiple occasions to strengthen capacity-building and intangible cultural heritage at the national level and at the international level with the funding of capacity-building initiatives in the service of many countries. The UAE will continue its efforts and commitment to capacity-building as it relates to the Convention, both at the national and international levels. It was happy that the agreement between the UAE and UNESCO could establish the Category 2 centre[[25]](#footnote-25) in the field of intangible cultural heritage in the Arab States, which was signed in Sharjah, UAE, in 2021. This initiative has already led to regional capacity-building events in Sharjah with the participation of Arab States. Moreover, UAE’s partnership with UNESCO and the ‘Revive the Spirit of Mosul’ initiative[[26]](#footnote-26) has a focus on capacity-building. The delegation was proud to report that the programmes have trained many Mosul inhabitants. The UAE closely follows the developments and discourse on the listing mechanisms and it looked forward to a path that is satisfactory for all. The UAE also appreciated UNESCO’s efforts on the commercialization of intangible cultural heritage and the safeguarding of living heritage in urban contexts. It looked forward to the guidelines and recommendations to be delivered by the Secretariat.
42. The delegation of **Poland** thanked the Secretariat for its dedicated work in the implementation of the Convention and for its detailed and comprehensive report. There had been many challenges during the last two years and it therefore welcomed the publication, *Living Heritage in the Face of COVID-19,* which presented a set of recommendations highlighting the way in which living heritage, its practice and transmission, had been disrupted by the pandemic. During the period of reforms and reflection on the Convention’s mechanisms, it is crucial to provide the most professional assistance. For this reason, it thanked the Secretariat for its great cooperation and efforts to assist States Parties during the process of the global reflection of the listing mechanisms, periodic reporting reform and the dialogue process. The delegation looked forward to taking part in the thematic discussion on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, as well as contributing to the holistic approach to heritage safeguarding and sustainable development. This demands further reflection on the approach towards climate change, commercialization, and ICH in urban contexts. It found the creation of the themes dedicated to intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations and intangible cultural heritage and education timely and much needed.
43. The delegation of **Peru** congratulated the Chairperson and the newly elected Bureau Members, welcoming Angola and Somalia to the Convention. It thanked the Assistant Director-General and wished Mr Tim Curtis a speedy recovery. The delegation commended the Secretariat for its excellent report on the activities undertaken during the reporting period despite the health crisis. The Secretariat is a key actor in the implementation of the Convention and for achieving the best possible results over multiple objectives. Peru also thanked Ambassador Oike of Japan for his leadership in the Open-ended working group on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which it hoped would further contribute to the smooth running of the Convention and its listing mechanisms in the future. Peru attaches great importance to the Convention, having participated actively in its work since ratifying the Convention [in 2005]. Peru has 13 elements of intangible cultural heritage on the Lists. In 2005, the first regional intangible cultural heritage centre (CRESPIAL) in the framework of this Convention was established, in Cuzco. Indeed, it is an honour for Peru to be able to host the Category 2 centre[[27]](#footnote-27), which was recently recognized as a good practice in the external assessment under the auspices of UNESCO, with very favourable outcomes. Eighteen countries in Latin America are providing their input to CRESPIAL and the technical Secretariat has therefore been able to make great progress in the implementation of the Convention, for example, in some of the multinational projects involving the safeguarding of intangible heritage in Bolivia, Chile and Peru. This was also the case for some projects on emergency situations in Central America and across the region. All of these achievements were possible thanks to these initiatives. Peru was delighted to see that CRESPIAL had proved to be a robust system for implementing intangible cultural heritage and the Convention in the coming years, thanking UNESCO for the possibility to host this centre.
44. The delegation of **Cuba** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its report, which covered many important issues concerning the overall running of this Convention as well as its major responsibilities with regard to managing living heritage, which complements built heritage. One of the key issues is capacity-building, and the delegation thanked the Secretariat for its cooperation and assistance in the regional elaboration of the periodic reports. It also thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in 2022 for its multinational nomination, which was very important for the Latin America region and particularly for SIDS, given the complexities they face and how hard it is for certain States to implement some of these cooperation projects. The delegation believed that the pandemic crisis had highlighted the objectives of the Convention, as well as the challenges owing to the threats and difficulties the world now faces, such as migration and conflict. UNESCO thus has the tools to assist the bearer communities to safeguard and transit their intangible cultural heritage. It was also vital to strengthen the activities to mitigate the impacts of climate change on heritage, particularly for SIDS, as they are disproportionately affected by natural disasters. Cuba believes that it is important to continue to reinforce measures to make the work of category 2 centres more visible, as they tackle the issues related to the Convention, as well as UNESCO Chairs. A very important initiative in the Culture Sector was the brochure published on UNESCO Chairs in the field of heritage[[28]](#footnote-28), which is important in involving States Parties, bearers and practitioners, as well as for the training of trainers to help improve capacities and as a guide for consolidating intangible cultural heritage strategies. Cuba was honoured to have shared its experience in its report on the creation of an intangible cultural heritage module in the San Gerónimo university in Havana dedicated to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, which can be taken by students and tertiary institutions on heritage. The delegation looked forward to working hand-in-hand with the Secretariat, the organs of the Convention and States Parties to continue its implementation of the Convention, which had become a reference in its holistic approach to the work of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
45. The delegation of **Cameroon** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau Members on their election and thanked the Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General for their diligence in the context of the health crisis, which had been marked by a lot of uncertainty. It is with this resilience that intangible cultural heritage had remained visible, restoring hope for the future. Cameroon also congratulated Angola and Somalia, whose ratification will strengthen the universal family of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation fully supported the Secretariat's report on the activities undertaken over the past two years. New tools had been devised, such as the MOOC and the toolkit, to give vitality to intangible cultural heritage and which are hugely important to the bearer communities. Attention had also been focused on thematic initiatives, which are frameworks for reflection and shared participatory contributions intended to improve understanding of intangible cultural heritage, as well as for finding potential synergies with other Conventions. The Assembly could count on Cameroon’s engagement, capitalizing on experiences with regard to the future of intangible cultural heritage in the African region. It also encouraged more capacity-building in the preparation of nomination files and inventories in order to improve inscriptions on the various lists, including intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. It also wished to see greater cooperation with and involvement of universities in Africa in the dissemination of knowledge and good practices in the field of intangible cultural heritage.
46. The delegation of **Hungary** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the elected Members of the Bureau. It thanked the Secretariat for the outstanding work over the last two years despite the great challenges. The delegation highlighted the great importance of cooperation among the States Parties that was initiated by the Secretariat. Indeed, despite all the difficulties, it is even more important to work together in the implementation of the Convention. In the absence of personal meetings, the new online communication provided many more opportunities for broad cooperation. Thanks to the focal points, new networks were created thanks to the capacity-building trainings organized by the Secretariat, which facilitated contact and enabled better exchanges and the sharing of good practices and experiences. Hungary also actively joined the European network of focal points, and it fulfilled the requirements of periodic reporting. It was also involved in the preparation of multinational nominations. Thanks to these programmes, Hungary can better involve the communities, experts, institutions and civil organizations in the active implementation of the Convention. The successful work of the Committee and the Secretariat had strengthened the Convention’s visibility and helped it achieve its goals, promoting a better understanding between cultures.
47. The **Chairperson** closed the debate and turned to the draft resolution. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 6 adopted**.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**Documents**: [*LHE/22/9.GA/11*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-11-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/9.GA/INF.11 Rev.7*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-INF.11_Rev.7_EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 11*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/11)

1. In a change of agenda, the **Assistant Director-General** proposedto present item 11.
2. The **Chairperson** opened item 11 and the election of members of the Committee, which would take place the following day, inviting the Secretariat to present the item.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that in conformity with Article 6 of the Convention, the General Assembly shall renew half of the States Members of the Committee every two years. Twelve States Parties will thus be elected to serve on the Committee for a term of four years from the date of election, i.e. 2022–2026. Pursuant to Article 14.1 of the Rules of Procedure, three months before the opening of the present session of the Assembly, the Secretariat had requested all States Parties to indicate whether they intended to stand for election to the Committee. The Secretariat then published the provisional list of candidate States on 7 June 2022, four weeks before the opening of the Assembly (document INF.11). The Secretariat also provided updated information on all compulsory and voluntary contributions to the Fund. The document was revised seven times, which was necessary in order to recognize new candidatures, withdrawals or updates on the status of contributions. All candidate States had satisfied their obligations to the Fund, as required by Article 26.5 of the Convention and Rule 14.2 of the Rules of Procedure, and they were thus eligible to stand for election as Members to the Committee. In addition, the Secretariat confirmed that the continuing Members of the Committee, whose term of office ends in 2024, had all satisfied the requirement under Article 26.5 of the Convention with regard to their compulsory or voluntary contributions.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** introduced the candidate States Parties. For Electoral Group I, Group III and Group V(a), the number of candidate States Parties corresponded to the number of vacant seats. This meant a clean slate situation for these three groups where all candidates will become Committee Members automatically without election. For Electoral Group II, Group IV and Group V(b), the number of candidate States Parties exceeded the number of seats to be filled and voting would be conducted by secret ballot. Document INF.11 Rev. 7 contains the names of the candidate States Parties for the election. Group I: Germany is the only candidate for one vacant seat. Group II: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovakia, Uzbekistan are candidates for two vacant seats. Group III: Paraguay is the only candidate for one vacant seat. Group IV: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam are candidates for four vacant seats. Group V(a): Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia are the only candidates for three vacant seats. Finally, Group V(b): Iraq and Mauritania are candidates for one vacant seat. Voting would take place the following day from 1.00–3.00 p.m. so as to allow sufficient time for voting and the counting of ballots, as well as the possibility for a second secret ballot if required. Two volunteers among the delegates would be designated as tellers. Their presence is required during the voting period and for the counting of ballots, which will take place immediately following the end of the voting. The Secretariat identified two delegates who had kindly accepted to assume the role of tellers. They were Ms Paola Gómez Barletta from Panama and Mr Julius Shoboi Mwahunga from Kenya.
5. The **Chairperson** took note that the Assembly confirmed the final list of candidate States. She sought the confirmation of the availability of the tellers.
6. **Ms Paola Gómez Barletta** confirmed her availability to perform the duty.
7. **Mr Julius Shoboi Mwahunga** also confirmed his readiness.
8. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretariat to explain the voting procedure.
9. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that the Secretariat had sent a circular to all States Parties on 23 June containing information on the procedure for electing members of the Committee. As previously indicated, the vote would take place during the lunch break the following day. There were two polling booths available in each room, i.e. four polling booths in total. There were no assigned voting slots and States Parties were able to vote at any time on the day and during the proposed times. The Secretariat would distribute three bulletins for Groups II, IV and V(b). Each State party is called upon to vote for these three Electoral Groups and not only for the group of which it is a member. The candidates having obtained the greatest number of votes will be declared elected, up to the number of seats to be filled in each Electoral Group. Each ballot bore the names of the States Parties standing for election for the Group in question, with an indication of the number of seats to be filled. States Parties were asked to encircle the names of the States Parties for which they wished to vote, and not an X or underline, as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure. Tellers would invalidate any ballot that did not conform. The ballot would also be considered invalid if more names are encircled than seats to be filled per Electoral Group. The ballots should be folded and placed in the envelope. The absence of a ballot in the envelope would be considered an abstention.
10. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no questions and she suspended item 11 and the formal adoption of the draft resolution, which would be reopened later in the session to officially recognize the results of the election once the counting of the votes was complete. **Item 11 was duly suspended**.
11. The **Chairperson** reminded the Bureau Members (Vice-Chairs from Belgium, Croatia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Madagascar, Syrian Arab Republic and the Rapporteur, Ms Daniela Rodriguez Uribe) of the meeting at 9.30 a.m. the following day.
12. The **Assistant Director-General** informed the delegates of a side event taking place in the evening when ICH NGO Forum and ICHCAP would launch their latest publication in the Living Heritage Series, *Traditional musical instruments, sharing experiences from the field*.[[29]](#footnote-29)

*[Wednesday, 6 July, morning session]*

**ORAL REPORT OF THE ICH NGO FORUM**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations to the second day of the General Assembly. Falling slightly behind schedule, the Bureau had adjusted the provisional timetable. The day’s meeting would start with the oral report of the ICH NGO Forum followed by the examination of item 7 on the accreditation of NGOs. The morning session would also include the examination of the item 8 on the endorsement of the procedure followed for the inscription of Joumou soup, and item 9 on the global reflection of the listing mechanisms and proposed revisions to the Operational Directives. The afternoon would continue with the examination of item 9 followed by item 10 on the use of resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. She invited Mr Turgeon, President of the ICH NGO Forum Steering Committee, to present his oral report.
2. The **President of the Forum, Mr Laurier Turgeon** spoke on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum to thank the States Parties and the Secretariat for their support and for the opportunity to present this report with suggestions on how NGOs might better contribute to the Convention. He thanked his colleagues of the Steering Committee who participated in the preparation of this report: Mr Sekou Berte, who represents Africa on the Steering Committee; Mr Mohammed Lemine, for the Arab States; Mr Robert Baron, for International NGOs; Ms Tamara Nikolic, for Eastern Europe; Ms Janet Blake, for Asia Pacific; Mr Martín Andrade-Pérez, for Latin America and the Caribbean; and himself for North America and Europe. The Forum now federates 184 accredited NGOs that are deeply grounded in communities and actively involved in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Since its foundation in 2009/2010, it has become the principle platform for communication, networking, exchange and cooperation among accredited NGOs, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at national, regional and international levels. The Forum brings extensive and highly diverse safeguarding experiences and expertise to the Convention. This report provides an overview of the NGO Forum from its creation and its evolution to the present day. It summarizes the activities and initiatives taken in 2020–2022 and suggests pathways for the Forum’s organizational development, and it proposes potential new advisory functions for the Forum. Founded through the initiative of NGOs in 2015, the Forum has rapidly developed sound governance practices and strong organizational structure. The membership represents all six UNESCO regions along with international NGOs, which is reflected in the seven democratically elected members of the Forum’s Steering Committee that meets regularly on a monthly basis to plan and undertake various initiatives. It is assisted by five dedicated working groups on: i) research; ii) the overall results framework; iii) increasing the representation of underrepresented regions; iv) ethics; and v) information technologies. It also has an *ad hoc* committee dedicated to improving the Forum’s regulatory instruments, i.e. byelaws and electoral rules, and a newly established fundraising committee. The Steering Committee possesses in-depth knowledge of the accreditation system. Its members regularly attend intergovernmental Committee meetings and have deep and diverse knowledge and experiences of the development, drafting and implementation of the Convention as well as safeguarding intangible cultural heritage on the ground in every region of the world. It is committed to expanding the number of accredited NGOs from underrepresented regions, which is the focus of the newly formed working group. The members are now ideally positioned to enable States Parties to include a wider number of accountable and committed voices in the Convention’s implementation in the spirit of Art. 9, Art. 11.b and Art. 15.
3. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** explained that in order to accomplish this goal, the Forum has undertaken a series of new projects and actions since December 2020. The Steering Committee has reached out to collaborate more closely with the working groups in order to develop a stronger and more targeted arrangement that will benefit the Forum and other stakeholders. To accomplish this, the Steering Committee organized meetings with the working groups and has encouraged them to report regularly, creating new mission statements and improving their organizational structures. Efforts have also been made to stimulate cutting-edge research aimed at improving safeguarding practices and finding new uses for intangible cultural heritage. The Forum organizes annual scientific symposia in the margins of the Committee meetings. In 2020, for example, the theme of the symposium was dedicated to intangible cultural heritage and sustainable tourism. In 2021, it was dedicated to traditional knowledge labelling and property rights. In 2022, the symposium was dedicated to intangible cultural heritage and the environment. The Forum also organized a seminar on good safeguarding practices and human security at the present Assembly. It provided support for the launching of the 2021 issue of the journal, *Heritage Alive* on making and playing traditional musical instruments. The Forum also provided funding for the creation of the Albert van der Zeijden prize for the best article published every year in the journal. The prize pays tribute to esteemed colleague Mr Albert van der Zeijden who sadly passed away in July 2021. Mr van der Zeijden headed up the ICH research working group for a number of years and made a great contribution to the Forum. In the past year, the Steering Committee has been primarily involved in undertaking a study on the expertise of accredited NGOs. Following Decision [14.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/15), the Forum was commissioned by the Secretariat in mid-August 2021 to conduct a project on mapping the expertise and involvement of NGOs accredited to the Convention. This provided an unprecedented opportunity for the Forum to identify competencies, activities and possibilities for sharing expertise among its fellow accredited NGOs and with other stakeholders of the Convention, in particular, with the Secretariat and States Parties.
4. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** spoke about the online survey that was designed and shared with the 194 accredited NGOs (as of August 2021) and was followed up by a peer-to-peer interview with a selection of 65 NGOs, mostly from underrepresented regions. This exercise elicited granular accounts of their expertise across a broad range of safeguarding practices and a candid discussion about how they might expand their involvement with the Convention. Participating NGOs agreed about the importance of enhancing regional networks and sharing expertise among peer NGOs on a regional basis. This project also re-examined the accreditation and reporting forms ICH-08 and ICH-09, substantially expanding the categories in terms of vocabulary employed by accredited NGOs in the indexation used by UNESCO. Infographics created for this project provide ready access to information about expertise and activities, and the potential advisory function of accredited NGOs in the work of the Committee and the implementation of the Convention. The report will be released in autumn 2022. The revenues from this contract were donated by the members of the Steering Committee to the Forum’s modest operational budget. The Steering Committee represented the Forum at meetings organized by UNESCO to address the current situation in Ukraine and its impact on heritage. During these meetings, the Steering Committee reports on the work of NGOs in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Ukraine and among Ukrainian refugees. It stays informed about the needs of NGOs, including through Mr Oleksandr Butsenko who leads the Ukrainian NGO Democracy through Culture. The situation in Ukraine inspired the Steering Committee to consider how the Forum can support intangible cultural heritage at risk in situations of conflict. The outcomes of these discussions included the launching of the Living Heritage For Peace Initiative[[30]](#footnote-30) which recognizes and celebrates intangible cultural heritage as a powerful tool for resilience in conflict situations. A fundraising committee was created to seek funding to assist intangible cultural heritage in any country in the world experiencing situations of crisis. The participation of NGOs and activities organized by the Forum during Committee meetings has grown over the last few years from 47 participating NGOs in 2016 to 86 in 2020 and 122 in 2022, as well as at the General Assembly. For example, in 2022, 91 NGO representatives registered and participated in meetings of the General Assembly, including four side events organized by the Forum. The seminar held the previous day on good safeguarding practices for human security, for example, was well attended and brought up some very stimulating discussions. There has also been a steady increase in participants over the last five years thanks to better knowledge of the Forum’s activities and the increasing number of services rendered by the Forum. For example, capacity-building workshops, symposiums, committee meetings and so on, as well as its permanent [website](http://www.ichngoforum.org/), and some financial support for the working groups. The Forum also has a more elaborate and stronger organizational structure with the creation of the Steering Committee bylaws, code of ethics and yearly elections. Finally, there is the possibility of attending online meetings, which has also contributed to greater participation, adding a heightened sense of belonging to the Forum.
5. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** remarked that the Convention is currently in a period of growth, but the resources supporting the Convention are not. The Forum strongly believed that this provides an opportunity to expand the range of advisory functions for accredited NGOs within the Convention. This could present an option to address the increasing workload and limited resources of the Secretariat, which would benefit all sides, including States Parties and the Convention. For example, the Forum is willing to actively participate in the working group led by Sweden to reflect on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention to enhance dialogue, a result of paragraph 9 of Decision [16.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/14). Following Recommendation 10[[31]](#footnote-31) of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group on the global reflection of the listing mechanisms, the working group was invited to consider ‘the possibility of obtaining additional information regarding nominations by using a dialogue process with accredited NGOs and communities, groups and individuals’. Mr Turgeon recalled that the Forum is a well-established body with clear organizational structure and legal status and already plays a role in implementing the Convention at local, national and international levels. The Forum embodies the interest of civil society and makes possible more inclusive involvement of stakeholders from a wide variety of social actors. The Evaluation Body comprises some NGOs and the Forum is thus ready and willing to extend NGO involvement in order to enhance the Evaluation Body’s work. Expanded involvement of NGOs would increase capacity to evaluate the growing number of files nominated by the States Parties for inscription, provide advisory services to communities, the Secretariat and States Parties, and to explore new uses for intangible cultural heritage and to construct a more sustainable and peaceful world.
6. The **Chairperson** thanked Mr Turgeon for the comprehensive presentation on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum. The report clearly showed the forum’s important contributions in coordinating the work of accredited NGOs. The Chairperson opened the floor for questions to the Forum.
7. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the ICH NGO Forum for its useful and substantive presentation which satisfied the request by the Committee to report on the Forum’s activities. Indeed, an information document presenting this report should be made available in the future, adding that NGOs play a very important role in the Convention.
8. The delegation of **Mongolia** echoed the remarks by Palestine on the importance of the ICH NGO Forum, which is crucial in the implementation of the Convention. It would indeed have been valuable to have a written report available.
9. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** thanked Mr Turgeon for his very exhaustive presentation, which bore witness to the extraordinary evolution of the Forum. The Syrian Arab Republic is actively represented in the Forum by the NGO Syria Trust for Development, which is also a member of the Evaluation Body for the period 2020–2024, and therefore enjoys a voting, decision-making position to help advance the work of the Forum. The delegation highlighted the link between NGOs (that carry out their activity within the Forum in accordance with the general stipulation that they are affiliated to a Member State), and the State Party itself (in a certain sense accredited to the Convention). In its experience, the NGO Syria Trust for Development is able to perform because of its work on the ground and benefits from the commitment of the Member State in the implementation of the Convention. In this regard, the delegation voiced support for this partnership with NGOs. Representatives of the Forum are indeed partners in informal consultations and even in the informal open-ended working groups, whose members are comprised of States Parties.
10. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** remarked that the Forum had the opportunity to work with Ms Reme Sakr, who represented the Syria Trust for Development. Her assiduous and constant participation in the activities of the Forum for four years, having completed her mandate in 2021, was highly appreciated. Together with the former members of the management committee, she had participated in the activities of the past two years and therefore, indirectly, in the preparation of the Forum report.
11. The delegation of **Colombia** thanked the President of the Forum for the report, adding that Colombia has been a very active participant in the functioning of these working groups for a number of years, the results of which had been very fruitful. It congratulated and thanked the Forum for its work, noting the great progress made over the past two years. The Forum is reaching full maturity and it hoped that this will benefit the implementation of the Convention. Colombia also has an NGO in the Evaluation Body and now in the Forum, and the delegation was convinced that the work carried out will prove very interesting to all parties.
12. The delegation of **Mexico** expressed thanks for the detailed report of the Forum. It especially appreciated the commitment to increasing the geographical representation of under-represented geographical regions. The delegation asked Mr Turgeon to explain this strategy and whether Mexico could contribute towards it.
13. The delegation of **Brazil** explained that working with civil society is fundamental to strengthening the 2003 Convention, as long as it continued concentrating on the role of local communities which is why Brazil supports the amendment presented by Mexico that aims to ensure better geographic representation, while strengthening the role of NGOs in the Convention. NGOs are local actors and therefore they are fundamental to ensuring the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention. Once these organizations are in a better position to work directly with bearer communities, the Assembly must ensure that accredited organizations have the technical capacity and share the values of UNESCO and the countries where they work to ensure the safeguarding, development and evaluation of the intangible cultural heritage present throughout their territories. NGOs must be committed to respecting the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned, and that they not only respect but also safeguard intangible cultural heritage. The Assembly must ensure that accredited NGOs implementing safeguarding activities in ‘our countries’ are knowledgeable of local communities and cultures when working in the local context, and that they work with local actors to ensure that they are not disconnected from the intangible cultural heritage they aim to protect. Otherwise, they will be unable to involve local communities and the bearers and transmitters of local intangible heritage. The Assembly needs to ensure a decolonialized approach that values not only local cultures but also the participation of the communities in the management of their own heritage. The delegation believed that NGOs are one of the main vectors to transmit and safeguard intangible culture and hence the need to pay attention to the accreditation process of such organizations. For these reasons, it agreed with Mexico’s position in ensuring a correct accreditation process is applied to NGOs interested in working for the Convention and have the capacity to do so.
14. The delegation of **Spain** congratulated the Chairperson on her leadership and thanked the Secretariat for its work. Spain also supported the proposal tabled by Mexico. As explained by Brazil, it believed that NGOs are a fundamental actor in the development of the Convention and are crucial for intangible cultural heritage. Nevertheless, there was a need to improve the accreditation processes and States Parties need to work more directly with NGOs to develop and support the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
15. The delegation of **Cuba** also supported the remarks made by the previous speakers. It believed that the work of the Convention requires collaboration with NGOs given their important experience on the ground. They therefore play a fundamental role in the process of identification, safeguarding and protecting intangible cultural heritage. The delegation supported any reform or initiative that aims to strengthen the work carried out by NGOs together with the different bodies of the Convention in the framework of shared responsibility with Member States. Moreover, it is crucial to strengthen synergies between NGOs and Member States due to the intergovernmental nature of the Convention. It was also indispensable to strengthen the accreditation mechanism for NGOs and to ensure better geographical balance within the Convention.
16. The **Chairperson** invited Mr Turgeon to respond to the questions.
17. **Mr Laurier Turgeon** thanked the delegations for their fruitful comments and stimulating questions, adding that he was grateful for their support. The Forum also believes, of course, that NGOs have an extremely important role to play in the Convention, and that their advisory functions should be expanded and increased for the well-being of the Convention and intangible cultural heritage. There is still work to be done on how to develop and implement those mechanisms, but – as reminded by many – NGOs very often represent communities. The communities of practitioners are NGOs or the NGOs constitute or represent communities of practitioners on the ground, so they have an important role to play in the discussions and evolution of the Convention. On establishing a better balance between the different geographical regions and how to increase the representation of under-represented regions, Mr Turgeon explained that the Forum had a working group specifically dealing with this issue in the past year. A series of recommendations and actions had been taken. The most efficient is to create regional networking between the groups and between the NGOs within the regions so that they can recruit more NGOs in those regions. This approach, for example, for Africa, has been fruitful and it has already stirred interest in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will only increase representation in those regions. Regional networking and the creation of regional working groups seems to be one of the promising avenues. But there are, of course, others. Mr Turgeon took the opportunity to thank Mr Leandro Peredo of the Secretariat who takes care of the Forum and who has been extremely generous with his time and advice, adding that his work for the Forum was truly appreciated.
18. The **Chairperson** thanked Mr Turgeon and all the speakers for the fruitful exchange and closed the discussion.

**ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY**

**Documents**: [LHE/22/9.GA/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-7-EN.docx)

[*46 requests*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accreditation-of-ngos-01257)

**Resolution**: [*9.GA 7*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/7)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 7 and the accreditation of NGOs to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** referred to working document 7. According to Article 9.1 of the Convention, the Committee is required to propose the accreditation of NGOs with recognized competence in the field of intangible cultural heritage to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee. This was the seventh time that the Assembly will consider requests for NGO accreditation. At its sixteenth session, the Committee considered new accreditation requests from 46 NGOs, and recommended the accreditation of 32 NGOs by the General Assembly (see Annex I). There were two cases of NGOs whose review for accreditation was deferred to the General Assembly by the Committee. These were Direct Gradual Development from Mexico and the Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM) from Spain. The authorities of Mexico and Spain and both NGOs had provided additional information.[[32]](#footnote-32) The General Assembly was thus invited to consider whether these two NGOs meet the conditions set out in paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives. In this regard, the Committee considered that there was a need to improve the current treatment of accreditation and renewed requests. The two following adjustments were thus proposed. Firstly, unlike previous cycles where the accreditation request was made public at the same time as the draft recommendation for the Committee (usually about four weeks before the Committee meeting), the Secretariat will now make the requests available (the Form ICH-09 and supporting documents) as soon as possible through the Convention webpage, as well as quadrennial reports by accredited NGOs following submission. This will allow more time for States Parties and other stakeholders to share their observations or comments. Secondly, at the same time, the Secretariat will consult relevant UNESCO Field Offices on the requests for new accreditation and renewals with a view to collecting information that will assist with the assessment of the request, as indicated in paragraph 92 of the Operational Directives. The Secretariat plans to apply these changes to the requests to be examined at the eighteenth session of the Committee in 2023 and the tenth session of the General Assembly in 2024. Furthermore, the experience of this new procedure will be reported to the Committee at its eighteenth session.
3. The **Chairperson** asked the Assembly to first examine the accreditation requests from the 32 NGOs recommended by the Committee, after which it would examine the two cases that were deferred by the Committee and then discuss any issues.
4. The delegation of **Palestine** took note of the explanation by the Assistant Director-General on the decision to approve the accreditation. However, it suggested to first listen to opinions and discuss other issues before finalizing the accreditation and the draft resolution. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for the clear report. Regarding the case of the two NGOs, it noted Mexico’s logical and acceptable proposal. On the plan to make accreditation requests available at an earlier date, the delegation believed that this was a very good step and it commended the Secretariat for this decision. Nevertheless, there remained the issue of NGOs affiliated to countries not Party to the Convention, as discussed at the last General Assembly, and hence Palestine’s amendment to the draft decision. The amendment relates to the accreditation and the election of NGOs to the Evaluation Body. It was recalled that many States Parties considered that such NGOs should not be accredited, with reference to Article 2.5 of the Convention and other paragraphs of the Operational Directives (such as paragraph 27 and paragraph 28). The Palestine amendment is based on the principle that States Parties have obligations and benefits under the Convention, of which accreditation of NGOs is one such benefit. Moreover, when the General Assembly created the Evaluation Body in Resolution [4.GA 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/4.GA/5) it was understood that the Evaluation Body would be composed of six experts and six NGOs, exclusively from States Parties to the Convention. The amendments to the Operational Directives, following the abovementioned Decision, concerned *inter alia* paragraphs 27 and 28. In paragraph 27, it stresses the importance of taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and, in paragraph 28, it stipulates that the Secretariat ‘shall inform the States Parties within each Electoral Group with a vacant seat to be filled’ on the Evaluation Body. This issue therefore had to be clarified first before moving forward because some of the NGOs up for accreditation come from States not Party to the Convention. The delegation clarified that its amendment was not aimed at preventing NGOs from practising and being part of the advisory bodies of the Convention and the Committee, the purpose was to respect the principle of obligations and benefits for States Parties. Palestine was the first one to commend the ICH NGO Forum for its presentation and one of the States Parties that had asked that the ICH NGO Forum be able to present its report to the Assembly. Indeed, NGOs – whether they are from States Parties or not – are efficient and necessary for the implementation of the Convention. But in this case, it was a matter of principle and legality.
5. The delegation of **Mexico** thanked the Secretariat for the report on the contribution of NGOs for the important role they play in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and fulfilling the noble goals of the Convention. It particularly thanked the Secretariat and the Committee for all the work done to improve the NGO accreditation process and for the attention given to the concerns of the government of Mexico through the ICH committee of the country on the accreditation of NGOs, which have headquarters in Mexico and Spain, as explained. Mexico had circulated a *note verbale* setting out the analysis regarding the accreditation of two organizations [Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACM) and Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association]. The delegation emphasized that Mexico did not intend to endorse a process which would limit the participation of civil society, especially given that the report states that the geographical representation of NGOs is unequitable, as explained by the President of the Forum. The delegation sought to promote a decision-making process that is both serious and responsible and also committed to the Convention. It therefore reiterated the need for a full review of the requests from NGOs because not all the information in the requests are complete. The delegation endorsed paragraphs 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12, which to a great extent reflected its own concerns. It would submit its amendment later in this session.
6. The **Chairperson** opened the general debate before going to the draft resolution.
7. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** thanked the Secretariat for the high quality documents, wishing Mr Curtis a speedy recovery. It remarked that the delegation was able to participate in the objective discussions that took place at the NGO Forum as an Observer, adding that the work of the Forum was indeed very relevant. The delegation thus wished to thank the Forum for its work and for the objective conduct of procedures by its Steering Committee. The delegation agreed that it was in the interest of Member States to see NGOs working under the auspices of a State Party to the Convention when participating both in the Forum and in the Evaluation Body. The delegation recalled that even within the Arab Group V(b), which seeks to work fairly and equitably within the region, debates take place on representativeness, balance and fairness within a single geographic group. It was thus in the interest of the Convention to ensure that the notion of equitable representation guides the choice and presence of NGOs that are not affiliated to a State Party to the Convention. It was noted that this was the case for some of the NGOs present. While their presence in the Forum was very well received and appreciated, the delegation believed that their presence within the Evaluation Body deserved to be examined. In this regard, it supported the remarks made by Palestine and Mexico, adding that it did not in any way wish to obstruct their participation within the Forum. However, the fact remained that States Parties had to decide on the relevance of their presence within the Evaluation Body, especially given the regulations in force, namely, Article 2.5 of the Convention and paragraphs 27 and 28 of the Operational Directives.
8. The delegation of **France** announced that the Association Ankraké of the island of Reunion, which sought accreditation by the Assembly, was proposing a side-event that evening, supported by the delegation of France. The aim was to present certain elements of the intangible cultural heritage of Reunion, particularly music and the Séga dance, which is on the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage, and Maloya, inscribed on the Representative List [in 2009], and the traditional tale Rakontaz zistoir, also on the national inventory.
9. The delegation of **Austria** welcomed the new accredited NGOs to the Convention and thanked the ICH NGO Forum for its continuous efforts. Accredited NGOs have an important role to play in intangible cultural heritage and the Convention. Among other things, they represent the initiatives of civil society and the connection to the local communities, groups and individuals practising and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The delegation believed that with the help of the ICH NGO Forum, there will be a better geographical balance. However, it was of the opinion that limiting accredited NGOs to only States Parties to the Convention was not in the inclusive spirit of the Convention, which seeks collaboration with civil society that transcends nationalities. Furthermore, many of the accredited NGOs have activities that go far beyond their borders, operating at both national and transnational levels. Thus, excluding these NGOs, which are situated in a country that are not Party to the Convention, hampers the endeavours of civil society and does not reflect the objective of diversity, which is so important to this Convention. The delegation was thus not in favour of excluding NGOs in their advisory capacities and in their role on the Evaluation Body.
10. The delegation of **Czechia** believed that to effectively safeguard intangible cultural heritage it was necessary to implement measures and activities at the level of States Parties and other partners, which include NGOs, experts, researchers and academics, among others. As noted multiple times, NGOs are often best placed to work directly with the communities concerned. Indeed, paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives outlines the main qualities for which NGOs can be accredited: i) their proven skills, qualifications and experience in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; ii) their objectives are in conformity with the spirit of the Convention; iii) they cooperate with the communities, groups and individuals concerned creating, practising and transmitting ICH; and iv) they possess operational capacities. These criteria qualify NGOs to play an advisory role within the Committee. The advisory functions of NGOs are also broader than the evaluation of nomination files by the Evaluation Body, the establishment of which is under the responsibility of the Committee, which comprises States Parties to the Convention, and following established terms of reference. In this regard, the current system is satisfactory and the delegation was not in favour of changing it. That said, it supported the Secretariat’s proposal, described in paragraph 11 of the working document, to improve the NGO accreditation process. The delegation reiterated the importance of cultural diversity of living traditions as well as the actors involved in their safeguarding. Thus it was not in the interest of the Convention to dispense with NGOs. Their operational work on the ground prove their importance and the Assembly should not restrict the network of partners by imposing restrictions, but rather trust the Committee in its decisions regarding the establishment of future advisory bodies.
11. The delegation of **Greece** congratulated the Chairperson on her excellent chairing. It believed in the spirit of the Convention and the Operational Directives, which enables competent NGOs to actively and productively participate in the work of the Convention. Moreover, Article 28 of the Operational Directives stipulate that once appointed, members of the Evaluation Body ‘shall act impartially in the interest of all States Parties and the Convention.’ Greece believed in the importance of inclusiveness enshrined in the spirit of the Convention without unnecessary barriers, while always taking into consideration the need to respect the principle of well-balanced geographical representation.
12. The delegation of **Grenada** underlined the importance of the work of the NGOs for the Convention as well as in their support to Members States in implementing this very important Convention. The delegation believed that the position voiced by Palestine was in conformity with decisions already taken and was thus justified and should be taken into consideration.
13. The delegation of **Estonia** has always expressed interest in the work of the ICH NGO Forum and its participation in implementing the Convention. However, having heard the different positions, Estonia did not support the amendment proposed by Palestine. NGOs are non-governmental by definition and what matters is their proven competence and expertise in the various domains of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, many NGOs have a regional or international reach and their domicile does not tie them exclusively to a particular country.
14. The delegation of **Colombia** has always promoted the participation of civil society in this Convention and believed that NGOs are one of the vehicles for this participation. However, it shared the concern on the issue raised by Palestine that States can have benefits without having obligations, for which it sought some clarification. The delegation was unaware as to whether any NGOs not affiliated with a State Party had already participated in the Evaluation Body. If that were the case, if would indeed be problematic, and it wondered how the Secretariat would deal with such a situation. The delegation also shared the concern regarding the geographical representation of NGOs and also the criteria of accreditation. It believed that they should be more rigorous, as stated by Mexico, and further work with the Secretariat should be conducted on this issue. The delegation also recalled that it was said that there are many NGOs and their role was not always clear. Thus, if the Assembly is not more rigorous, the accreditation of even more NGOs would only compound this problem. Hence, the delegation’s word of caution with regard to the revision of criteria.
15. The delegation of **Zambia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, adding that it was indeed very important to involve the NGOs and that this issue concerned specifically local NGOs, even though the importance of international NGOs is fully appreciated. Indeed, intangible cultural heritage is best understood by the local NGOs, while international NGOs can intervene and provide technical support or any other support that might be required. Thus, the involvement of NGOs is very important to make progress on intangible cultural heritage, particularly local NGOs that create the linkages and synergies.
16. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** echoed the statements made by Austria, Czechia, Greece and Estonia. It has always supported and will continue to support the role of NGOs in the Convention and the development of the Forum. Accredited NGOs and intangible cultural heritage experts play an important role within the Convention. They form a valuable intermediary between the communities, States Parties and the Committee. Further, the delegation saw the spirit of the Convention as one where many communities and NGOs around the world can participate. It highly valued the participation of NGOs within the Convention, adding that all of those endorsing the spirit of the Convention and meeting the criteria for accreditation should be accredited.
17. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked GRULAC[[33]](#footnote-33) for its trust in its election as Vice-Chair. Concerning the proposal by Mexico, it agreed that the process for the accreditation of NGOs needs to be rigorous, as required by any presentation made by a State based on accepted procedures. The delegation believed that Palestine’s proposal was important and it remarked on the concern expressed by States Parties that the proposal would in fact limit the participation of NGOs. However, it did not believe that this was the case as the proposal simply indicated that NGOs based in States not Party should not be eligible for the Evaluation Body, which is fully in line with the principles of the Convention in which States not Party to the Convention cannot sit on the Committee. In this context, NGOs from States not Party should not have rights that States not Party do not have. Nevertheless, NGOs can be accredited and participate, and it was important to reflect the amendment by Palestine in the decision. The delegation also aligned with the remark made by Cuba that the Assembly recognized the work carried out by all NGOs, but it also needs to strengthen its support of NGOs and its synergy with States Parties.
18. The delegation of **Sweden** was happy to note the support for the work of the NGOs and to see that they have a very important role to play. In addition, it is very important to reiterate that NGOs are nongovernmental in nature, as stated by other States, and it was key to note that they do not necessarily only deal with national issues. The delegation also very much aligned with the statements made by Greece, Austria, Czechia and the Netherlands. The delegation was also clear that the discussion on the work carried out on the listing mechanisms for two years should not be opened up for debate as it had already been widely discussed. The question here concerns the eligibility of an NGO to serve on the Evaluation Body and its accreditation, recalling that the decision [to accredit an NGO] is first made by the Committee through a process of election and then endorsed by the General Assembly. So, the issue did not concern the accreditation of an NGO but rather its eligibility. The current process is part of the inclusivity and broad participation that the Assembly wants from this Convention. Sweden therefore did not support Palestine’s proposal and suggested to go straight to the decision.
19. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the President of the NGO Forum for this important discussion, especially as it concerns civil society, which it supported at all levels. The delegation did not recommend broadening unconditionally the recognition of NGOs that are not associated with States Parties. However, it believed that giving them the possibility to be recognized at their national level through a declarative system is extremely important. Mauritania respects the legislation of countries, but in several countries, NGOs are subject to receipts, and thus the best way to grant them independence is to have a declarative system, like in Mauritania where an IT platform generates the accreditation for NGOs. Indeed, NGOs play an extremely important role in society, especially in safeguarding intangible heritage, and they must therefore be given the opportunity to be recognized. However, its experience at the international level had revealed the politicized nature of NGOs.
20. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order from Syria.
21. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** reminded the Assembly that the Convention operated in a highly regulated framework. Grenada had highlighted Decision [16.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/15) adopted at the sixteenth session of the Committee. Indeed, paragraph 11 of this decision was very clear that the Secretariat had been tasked to set up a consultation mechanism with the States Parties which, ‘allows it to obtain as much information as possible on requests for accreditation of NGOs’ in order to become a member of the Evaluation Body and achieve its goals and objectives in accordance with the principles of the Convention. In this regard, the legal statutory framework stipulates the *sine qua non* condition for NGO accreditation and that the request is presented to the Secretariat. The delegation thus proposed to add to the agenda of the next session of the Committee, a draft decision asking to reflect on the accreditation of NGOs belonging to States not Party to the Convention, which would resolve this issue and enable the Assembly to move forward and adopt draft resolution 7.
22. The **Chairperson** asked the Assistant Director-General to read out the list of speakers.
23. The delegation of **Panama** called a point of order, asking the Chairperson to clarify whether the list pertained to the general debate or the draft resolution.
24. The **Chairperson** asked the delegations whether they wished to continue the general debate or to go straight to the draft resolution.
25. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked that some delegations had not yet expressed their position and it would be fairer to give the floor to all those that had requested to speak, after which the Assembly could proceed to the draft resolution.
26. The **Chairperson** remarked on the long list, asking delegations to respect the time limit.
27. The delegation of **Kenya** hoped for a consensus at the end of this discussion, agreeing that NGOs are of critical importance to the success of the Convention and to the transmission and preservation of intangible cultural heritage. As stated in paragraph 90 of the Operational Directives, they assist in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage and other appropriate safeguarding measures in cooperation and coordination with other actors involved in the implementation of the Convention. On this note, the delegation underscored the pervasive nature of intangible cultural heritage in that its wealth is not delimited by borders, whether national or geographical and, as such, different parts of the world gain in fostering mutual peer-to-peer support and benefit from learning opportunities. It therefore emphasized the relevance of the accreditation of NGOs based on their recognized competence in the field of intangible cultural heritage to contribute in an advisory capacity to the Committee’s work. In this vein, it is important to acknowledge the wealth of expertise and proven competence and contributions available globally in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. This would benefit the work of the Convention, even in an advisory capacity. Given their valuable expertise beyond borders, NGOs with recognized competence and expertise, affiliated with States Parties to the Convention, and that meet the criteria set out in the Convention should be acknowledged and harnessed to the benefit of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
28. The delegation of **Slovakia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and joined the speakers who highlighted the importance of NGOs in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It considered that the current practice of accreditation was good in that NGOs are accredited based on their competence, experience and contribution rather than their domicile. Indeed, Palestine had highlighted the important issue concerning the imbalance in geographical representation. The delegation was, however, of the opinion that rather than restrict the Committee – on who it can elect or not – NGOs from underrepresented regions should be encouraged and the Assembly should perhaps think of concrete measures to encourage them to submit accreditation requests in order to have a better balance in terms of geographic representation.
29. The delegation ofthe **Islamic Republic of Iran** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and spoke in support of Palestine’s proposal. The importance of NGOs is clear and thus privileges should come with responsibilities.
30. The delegation of **Egypt** thanked the President of the Forum for a very complete presentation, agreeing that NGOs play a major role in the implementation of the Convention. The rationale behind Palestine’s proposal is very clear and relevant because NGOs must belong to a State Party if they are to serve and implement the Convention. If an NGO wished to be accredited then it should request or encourage the State Party to which it belongs to ratify the Convention. The delegation also endorsed Mexico’s proposal.
31. The delegation of **Germany** aligned with the remarks made by Austria, Greece, Czechia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Slovakia, adding that it is essential that the spirit of the Convention be respected so that civil society can play an active role as granted by the Convention. It did not believe in imposing restrictions, which would be detrimental to the Convention, especially as the current process was adequate.
32. The delegation of **China** remarked that the Convention currently has 180 States Parties and, as a State Party, China has the opportunity for international cooperation. It also has obligations. There are already 184 accredited NGOs with advisory status. They fully use their expertise in intangible cultural heritage and play an important role in implementing the Convention at different levels. China highly appreciates the positive contributions made by NGOs in their field. Pursuant to Article 27 of the Operational Directives, the Evaluation Body is in charge of examining the two Lists and the programmes and projects that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention. The Evaluation Body is thus tasked with a very important mission and NGOs that have participated in these evaluations have contributed to the success of the Convention. At the same time, the experience they acquire through work on the Evaluation Body can also play an important role at the national level. China therefore supports Palestine’s proposal that only NGOs from States Parties, accredited by the General Assembly, are eligible to join the Evaluation Body. In this regard, the delegation encouraged more NGOs from States Parties to join in the implementation of the Convention.
33. The delegation of **Norway** acknowledged and strongly supported the important role played by NGOs. Independent and active NGOs are key actors in the development of the Convention. It therefore supported the remarks made by Austria, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden, so that the Convention remained as inclusive as possible.
34. The delegation of **Poland** spoke of how the work of NGOs in intangible cultural heritage and the Forum is essential to the development of the Convention, communities and bearers. It thanked the Forum for its very good report and it supported the position voiced by Sweden and others that shared the same opinion. For the UNESCO community and intangible cultural heritage, it is essential that NGOs are given a voice and act in their countries, even those that are in States not Party to the Convention, as it enriches the wider perspective of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
35. The delegation of **Ethiopia** agreed that the issue was one of inclusivity. It is important that in all fora and organizations, such as NGOs and decision-making bodies, be as inclusive and geographically balanced as possible. Unfortunately, the ICH NGO Forum is perhaps the most unbalanced forum there is today with Africa reported to have only a 12% representation. Looking at the number of new NGOs that seek accreditation, out of 32 NGOs only four are from Africa. This cannot remain acceptable, at least not for Africans. The Forum is therefore not representative despite being an international forum. The expressed opinions during this discussion reflect that, with the highly represented regions wishing to keep the status quo. The delegation agreed that it is important that NGOs possess the competence, experience, objectivity and spirit of the Convention, which are important criteria for accreditation. But similarly, the Assembly should work towards rebalancing the composition of the Forum. In this regard, Ethiopia held a different view from Palestine. It was not against NGO representation on the Forum from States that are not Party to the Convention, as it believed in inclusivity. But it was also for a more balanced representation on the Forum. In order to correct the imbalance, the delegation suggested that when accreditations are presented, a strict compliance with geographic distribution should be applied. This means that if 32 NGOs seek accreditation then, at the very least, 7–10 should come from Africa, 7–10 should come from Europe, and so forth. The delegation agreed that certain NGOs have an international reach, working beyond their borders, but they are also grounded in countries and obey jurisdictions, like individuals, and they also carry biases. Thus, if the Forum is to be truly international, the rules should be changed to reflect that.
36. The delegation of **Morocco** fully concurred with the position expressed by Ethiopia. It remarked that no speaker opposed the fact that NGOs are important stakeholders and that they should be fully and completely involved in the process related to the Convention, playing an essential role in this regard. The delegation took the opportunity to thank the President of the NGO Forum. However, it was also true that there is an imbalance in the representation of NGOs, as mentioned by Ethiopia. In the list of NGOs presented, a large number of NGOs come from Europe and other regions, but Africa is grossly under-represented, with only 3 NGOs from the Arab region. The delegation returned to Cuba’s very interesting intervention on the necessity to strengthen the accreditation mechanism. Indeed, a better geographical balance is crucial. It had also been recalled during this debate that NGOs are non-governmental, but they are also authorized by governments, i.e. there are no supranational NGOs, they are, first and foremost, national in reach. The delegation also agreed that NGOs must be scrupulously assessed with regard to their competence in matters of intangible heritage. In the past, NGOs were accredited even when they did not have the requisite criteria on questions of competence and specialization concerning heritage, particularly intangible heritage. There is work to be done in this regard, hence the importance of this discussion, which although long, had gradually moved towards a consensus. The delegation remarked that all States Parties agreed on inclusiveness and that there should be as many NGOs as possible involved with the Convention. However, to achieve this, adjustments and changes need to be made to address the imbalance in number of NGOs. Indeed, it is unacceptable that there are so few NGOs in Africa today, simply because there is no support. Capacity-building provides an opportunity with respect to Africa to address and reduce this imbalance. The delegation was happy for this frank discussion and constructive exchange, which will help achieve what all States Parties want, which is for the Convention to operate in the best possible way, integrating all the actors for its implementation under the best conditions.
37. The delegation of **Lithuania** supported the positions expressed by several delegations, in particular, Austria, Estonia, Czechia, Greece, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovakia, Germany, Norway, Poland, and many others that spoke in favour of extending accreditation to NGOs from countries that are not Party to the Convention. It considered that the skills and expertise of NGOs are essential for the Convention. Inclusiveness would contribute to promoting the spirit of the Convention in countries that are not party to the Convention. The delegation believed that their participation could contribute to the emergence of new States Parties in the future. It also agreed with the relevant concerns voiced by various delegations regarding geographical balance, as well as the importance of strengthening the NGO sector in all regions of the world and that there is indeed a lot of work to do in this area.
38. The delegation of **Lebanon** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and for her guidance of the debates. It admitted from being a little lost by the discussion. It could lean towards Palestine’s proposal for the sake of principle, out of Arab solidarity, but it also agreed with its logic. But, listening to the other delegations, the delegation wondered why there had to be NGOs from States not Party to the Convention, and whether this was purely for the sake of inclusivity. *What use would it be for Lebanon, for example, to be presented with requests to have NGOs from a non-State Party?* If this is because of the principle of competence, *did that mean that there are no competent NGOs among the States Parties?* The delegation sought to be convinced and wondered whether there were examples that showed an NGO [of a non-State Party] help a State or a file in such a way that justified the measure.
39. The delegation of **Panama** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau, thanking the President of the Forum for the information provided, as well as the Secretariat. It was happy to note the inclusion of two Panamanian NGOs among those to be accredited. However, as other delegations had mentioned, it was unsatisfactory to note that Latin America counted only three countries among the 32 accredited NGOs. The delegation also noted that 54% of the accredited NGOs come from Group I, with the remaining Groups making up the rest of the total. The delegation suggested that greater efforts should be made, by Member States and also the Secretariat, to ensure that the NGOs on the list have the requisite competence, as this was not just a matter of accreditation or country of affiliation. The delegation spoke of cases in which NGOs are accredited in Europe but are active in Latin America. It was thus unclear whether their competencies lay in Latin America or Europe. This is one of the cases the Assembly will later examine. The delegation supported the proposed amendment by Mexico, adding that it is clear that the task of NGOs is fundamental. Indeed, there is no such thing as ‘team States Parties’ and ‘team NGO’. We are all working together towards the success of this Convention. The delegation agreed that more information and research was needed when proposals are tabled, insisting that it is up to States Parties to ensure that NGOs take an interest and have all the prerequisites for accreditation that States Parties themselves have decided.
40. The delegation of **Belgium** congratulated the Chairperson on the excellent conduct of the work. Belgium supports the work of NGOs in this Convention. As explained by Sweden, NGOs are non-governmental and are therefore not linked to governments. The delegation also supported the accreditation of NGOs domiciled in States not Party to the Convention. NGO accreditation forms could, as mentioned by Morocco, better identify capacities and fields of competence, and whether they serve at the local, national or international level, as mentioned by Panama. The delegation wants the Convention to remain as inclusive as possible.
41. The delegation of **Switzerland** reiterated the crucial role of NGOs in this Convention, as recalled by many delegations. Therefore, any changes concerning NGOs must be considered with caution and in accordance with the established rules. As such, the delegation did not believe that the amendment proposed by Palestine on the accreditation of NGOs and their eligibility for the Evaluation Body was in line with Article 27 and Article 91 of the Operational Directives. In both cases, the fact that the NGO must be based in a State Party to the Convention is not part of the criteria. The proposed amendment therefore has no basis in the relevant provisions, creating unnecessary ambiguity. It would also involve revising the Operational Directives. Moreover, Sweden rightly recalled that almost two years had been spent working in the Open-ended working group to formulate a balanced revision of the Operational Directives. Moreover, the subject of accreditation or eligibility of NGOs was never addressed. On the contrary, the working group recommended confirming the composition and functioning of the Evaluation Body. For these reasons, Switzerland did not support the proposed amendment.
42. The **Chairperson** thanked the speakers and closed the debate, inviting the Assistant Director-General to reply to the questions.
43. The **Assistant Director-General** took note that the delegations had recognized the contribution of NGOs and had agreed that NGOs bring the Convention to life, adding that the Assembly works on its experience based on the regulations governing the operation of the Convention. The Assistant Director-General responded to the two main points of discussion: geographical representation and the amendment proposed by Palestine, which was supported by some States but not viewed positively by others. He recalled that there are 184 accredited NGOs, of which currently only 18 (or 10%) are located in States not Party to the Convention. As the Convention was close to being universal (193 Member States), this amounted to 13 non-Party States. The Assistant Director-General recalled the change in functioning of the Evaluation Body in 2015. Since then, no NGO from an unrepresented country had served in the advisory body at that time. Prior to 2015, there had been around 15 NGOs that had served on the Consultative Body [as it was known at the time] when their countries were non-Parties to this Convention. Among these, several States are today Parties to the Convention. Thus, these NGOs were able to support the Member States (which were not yet parties to the Convention) into taking an interest in the Convention. Indeed, this occurred in several countries, including an African country, an Asian country and a Latin American country.
44. Concerning geographical balance among the NGOs, the **Assistant Director-General** clarified that the two under-represented regions were Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab region, i.e. not the Africa region, which have around 4–5% of the total number of NGOs. The issue was therefore related to several Groups. This is due to an historical reason, i.e. the order in which States ratified the Convention from the beginning. Today, indeed, there is a tendency in the Conventions to find a consensus in order to achieve regional balance. This is an important discussion that indeed needs to take place, for example, on how the future ICH NGO Forum will function and operate.
45. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that during the ResiliArt debates, a third of all the debates, from all countries and regions, concerned intangible heritage, of which 30% were from Africa. Thus, there are NGOs and people who want to actively participate in this Convention, as is the case for other regions. The second point of discussion concerned accredited NGOs from a State not Party to the Convention and whether or not they can serve on the Evaluation Body. Ultimately, the decisions will be guided by the Convention texts. The Assembly would open the debate on the amendment during the session. The Assistant Director-General responded to the question posed by Lebanon regarding the contributions made by NGOs in the past, recalling that there were several examples in the field, usually benefitting the UNESCO Field Offices. On numerous occasions, UNESCO programme specialists, who are familiar with the operation of the Conventions, work with NGOs in the field, whether or not they are accredited, to help draft inventories and to provide assistance, typically, to the ministries of culture, which are in charge of establishing inventories. Indeed, this concept is less than 20 years old, with the Convention celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2023. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on the Convention’s future and how to engage even more to better involve NGOs in this common task of safeguarding intangible heritage.
46. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the explanation and turned to the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.
47. The delegation of **Palestine** requested the presence of the Legal Adviser given the legal issues that had been mentioned and with regard to its amendment, whether it is adopted or amended. The delegation understood that the accreditation of NGOs or their election to the Evaluation Body from States not Party to the Convention would not require any changes to the Operational Directives, which meant that a decision by the Assembly would suffice.
48. The **Chairperson** confirmed that the Legal Adviser would soon join.
49. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked on the many interventions that insisted on geographical balance, noting that the NGOs from States not Party to the Convention principally came from Group I. The delegation reiterated its attachment to the work of all NGOs. For example, NGOs working on issues of intangible cultural heritage also defend the rights of the Palestinian people, like the Israeli NGO B’Tselem, for example, whose work the delegation appreciated. In this regard, Palestine was the first to have congratulated and thanked the President of the Forum. Nevertheless, the issue at hand has two parts: the amendment by Mexico, which Palestine supported, and the amendment by Palestine. The two separate issues contained in Palestine’s amendment concerned the accreditation to the Forum and the election of such NGOs to the Evaluation Body. In the amendment, the proposal that the NGOs could neither be accredited nor elected is an open matter for discussion, noting that many delegations were in favour of accreditation but not their election [to the Evaluation Body]. Thus, having NGOs in the Forum is an inclusive measure, but having them on the Evaluation Body does not pose a question of inclusivity as they will be acting in an advisory capacity within the Forum just not in the Evaluation Body.
50. The delegation of **Colombia** remarked that the amendments presented by Mexico did not require the Legal Adviser and therefore suggested to start with them first.
51. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order by Palestine, and she therefore suggested to go through the draft resolution paragraph-by-paragraph.
52. The **Assistant Director-General** turned to the draft decision 9.GA 7 and paragraph 1, ‘The General Assembly, Having examined document LHE/22/9.GA/7 Rev. and its Annexes’, which was duly adopted. Paragraph 2, ‘Recalling Article 9 of the Convention and paragraphs 91-99 of the Operational Directives’, which was adopted. Paragraph 3, ‘Further recalling Decision 16.COM 15’, which was adopted. Paragraph 4, ‘Accredits the 32 NGOs listed in Annex I to this resolution to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee’.
53. The delegation of **Palestine** asked that the amendment it submitted be considered first before adopting paragraph 4 and proposed to bracket the paragraph and continue.
54. The **Chairperson** agreed to come back after the other paragraphs.
55. The **Assistant Director-General** continued with paragraph 5, ‘Takes note of the additional information provided by the organizations listed in Annex II to this resolution as well as by [one of the States Parties] [the States Parties] concerned’. There were 2 options provided for this paragraph: Option A (both NGOs satisfy the criteria and are accredited) and Option B (IPACIM and Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association do not satisfy the criteria and are not accredited).
56. The delegation of **Mexico** wished to add an Option C to paragraph 5, which would read, ‘decides to accredit the Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM) to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee’. The second part would read, ‘invites Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association to resubmit, should it so wish, a request for accreditation in a future cycle’. The delegation explained the reasons for its amendment. There were inaccuracies in the forms presented by Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association, such as the letter in May 2022 affirming that it had participated in the evaluation of nominations to the Lists of the Convention. However, in keeping with the Operational Directives, the evaluation of nominations to the Lists and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices is carried out by the Evaluation Body; accredited NGOs do not have this ability and therefore the statement by Direct Gradual Development is incorrect. The Technical Secretariat for the National Committee for ICH considered that Direct Gradual Development does not fulfil the criteria established to attain accreditation in an advisory capacity to the Convention, including linguistic capacity. This was why Mexico invited this NGO to submit a stronger file in the next cycle in line with the approved procedures. Regarding the Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM), Mexico has had close communication on this issue with the Ministry of Culture of Spain. This was mainly because of its potential as a multinational nomination. The delegation believed that the studies had been carried out correctly and, in a spirit of cooperation, agreed with Spain’s statement and thus supported the accreditation of this NGO. The delegation concurred with delegations that the role of civil society and the participation of NGOs should be strengthened, agreeing with the objective of more equitable geographic distribution. However, the Assembly must ensure that the organizations accredited to the Convention carry out their work in a serious manner in favour of the bearer communities and practitioners, the main beneficiaries of the Convention. The delegation reiterated that it did not seek to curtail participation but rather to ensure a more solid nomination file for the next cycle.
57. For the sake of clarity, the **Chairperson** asked the Secretariat to read out the paragraph with the proposed amendment.
58. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that the chapeau text of paragraph 5 had been drafted in this way as the Secretariat did not know whether the States Parties concerned would provide any additional information, but that it would be formulated accordingly. Paragraph 5, would thus read, ‘Takes note of the additional information provided by the organizations listed in Annex II to this resolution as well as by the States Parties concerned and decides to accredit the Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM) to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee, and invites Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association to resubmit, should it so wish, a request for accreditation in a future cycle’.
59. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked Mexico for its constructive dialogue, however, it did not fully understand the reasoning behind the amendment as it believed that there had been enough information and that it was consistent with the criteria. Thus, for the sake of all-important inclusivity and transparency, the delegation sought to understand why the criteria had not been fulfilled. It was of the understanding that in its first round at the Committee, the criteria in the nomination file was deemed by the Secretariat to have been satisfied. For this reason, the delegation supported Option A [which accredits both NGOs].
60. Following the clarifications provided, the delegation of **Colombia** supported the clear proposal by Mexico, adding that the aim was not to limit participation in any way but to insist on the very rigorous technical and legal presentation of files for accreditation. The delegation believed, as mentioned by several speakers during the debate, that occasionally there are concerns about accreditations which require more information, as in this particular case. The NGO was thus invited to resubmit a file to allay any doubts and correct inaccuracies in a new submission in the future. It was not to limit the participation of the NGO.
61. The delegation of **Czechia** took note of Mexico’s concerns regarding the two NGOs cited and, although it understood the issues raised, it agreed with Sweden that when the NGO Direct Gradual Development’s accreditation file was examined by the Secretariat, no technical or other issues had been raised. It was also unclear which criterion was not met. The delegation was thus in favour of accrediting both NGOs, particularly with regard to the fair treatment of all requests. Hence, the two NGOs met the accreditation criteria and option A was preferred.
62. The delegation of **Palestine** had closely looked at the exchanges and responses of the NGOs and parties concerned and felt that Mexico’s proposal was logical and defensible. All delegations, including Mexico, are committed to inclusiveness, and this amendment does not exclude the NGO. It simply gives it the opportunity to resubmit the request after having scrupulous respected the accreditation procedure for the sake of transparency. Palestine thus supported Mexico’s amendment.
63. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** supported Mexico’s amendment. It agreed that the Secretariat had done an excellent job and the nature of the correspondence had been clearly explained. The delegation called on all NGOs to apply extra effort to comply with paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives. In this sense, it supported the amendment by Mexico.
64. The delegation of **Argentina** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the members of the Bureau. It wished to highlight the fact that the amendment by Mexico had already received the support of several delegations during the general debate. Mexico is simply stating that the NGO should resubmit its file in a future cycle in order to meet all the criteria, as required by the procedure. The delegation thus supported the amendment.
65. The delegation of **Uruguay** congratulated the Chairperson on her election as well as the Bureau. Uruguay also supported the amendment presented by Mexico, adding that it was fully and clearly explained. The delegation also supported the remarks by Argentina and Colombia that all NGOs should be treated the same and that inclusivity requires being rigorous, as mentioned by other speakers. This was not about excluding NGOs but simply taking into consideration the remarks presented by Mexico, i.e. to defer the decision to a future cycle in the hope that the NGO will be able to fulfil all the required criteria to guarantee transparency.
66. As previously indicated, the delegation of **Spain** also supported the amendment presented by Mexico, as well as the remarks made by Colombia, Palestine, Argentina and Uruguay. Mexico was simply requesting more time to be able to look into the file of this NGO so that the accreditation is fully credible, as required for the functioning of the Convention.
67. The delegation of **Dominican Republic** agreed with the arguments presented by Mexico and supported the remarks made by many other countries in support of the amendment.
68. The delegation of **Egypt** supported the amendment proposed by Mexico, adding that the NGO had presented additional information, which was not contained in the initial application submitted. Hence, it supported the recommendation to carry out a more exhaustive review and allow the NGO to participate in the next cycle of accreditation with a more solid file.
69. The delegation of **Grenada** supported the amendment of Mexico and noted that the reference to Decision 16.COM 15 was included in the draft decision, which states that the Committee, ‘requests the Secretariat to put in place a clear communication mechanism with the States Parties that allows it to obtain as much information as possible on requests for accreditation of NGOs, to achieve the fulfilment of the objectives, ethical principles and cooperation in the spirit of the 2003 Convention.’ This new mechanism can be expected from the Committee and the Secretariat, with Mexico asking for more time. It therefore supported Mexico’s amendment.
70. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** endorsed Mexico’s proposal, adding that it should be possible to defer files submitted by NGOs which are neither complete nor rigorous so as to meet the requirements for excellence, which forms the basis of the Convention. Mexico’s amendment did not in fact limit the standards of excellence but actually seeks to strengthen them.
71. The delegation of **Poland** reiterated its question, asking for clarification on the criteria that were not met. It supported Option A.
72. The delegation of **Cuba** endorsed the statements of all the States that spoke in support of Mexico’s amendment. It was felt that more time was required to evaluate the request given the present situation.
73. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** supported Option A to grant accreditation to both NGOs. Regarding the accreditation of NGOs, the Netherlands supported the usual course of action by which the Secretariat advises whether NGOs can be accredited or not based on criteria and whether or not there is enough information available. The delegation wished to prevent this case from setting a precedent. The accreditation should only be based on the criteria and advice of the Secretariat after which the recommendation is adopted by the General Assembly.
74. The delegation of **Paraguay** endorsed Mexico’s proposal, adding that the wording is clear and fully justified and does not seek to exclude any NGO. It is simply ensuring stringent enforcement of the criteria.
75. The delegation of **Morocco** supported the amendment proposed by Mexico insofar as there is an imperative of rigour and strict respect for procedures. There is no desire to exclude, but simply to gather more information and to give the NGO the possibility to present its request in a future cycle.
76. The delegation of **Japan** remarked thatthere were no accredited NGOs in Japan, which was why it does not take strong positions on NGO issues. However, in this case, it supported Mexico’s proposal as it was simply asking for more time, adding that this issue did not necessitate serious debate. Moreover, no country should force others when they are simply asking for time. For the sake of consensus, given the broad support, it supported Mexico.
77. The delegation of **Ethiopia** echoed the comments made by Japan that Mexico was just asking for more time and its arguments were convincing. It thus supported Mexico’s amendment.
78. The delegation of **Switzerland** was unable to take a position on any of the options presented as it still did not understand the reasons for the refusal. As explained by Sweden and Poland, the delegation wished to know concretely, with reference to Article 91 of the Operational Directives, which criteria set out in these provisions were not satisfied. The delegation asked Mexico to provide this information, based on which it would make its decision.
79. The delegation of **Peru** agreed with the arguments put forward by Mexico that this amendment seeks not to limit the accreditation of the NGO but simply to defer its accreditation. Peru also endorsed the remarks made by the delegations supporting Mexico’s amendment.
80. The delegation of **Poland** reiterated its support for Option A.
81. The delegation of **Kenya** supported the amendment by Mexico.
82. The delegation of **Ecuador** also endorsed Mexico’s proposal, noting that more time was requested to consider the request and to enforce the standards of stringency and accuracy of the information provided. It therefore endorsed Mexico’s proposal.
83. The delegation of **Brazil** also endorsed the proposed amendment by Mexico.
84. The **Chairperson** noted two proposals for paragraph 5, with one receiving broad support.
85. The delegation of **Panama** remarked that the draft decision, as projected on the screen, was unclear as it simply listed the supporting States. On the one hand, there was support for the accreditation of IPACIM and, on the other hand, more information was requested from Direct Gradual Development.
86. The **Chairperson** requested the Secretariat to provide a clean copy with the list of supporting States appearing separately at the bottom of the page. Two options were thus presented. Mexico’s amendment [Option C], would read, ‘decides to accredit Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM) to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee and invites Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association to resubmit, should it so wish, a request for accreditation in a future cycle’. The other proposed Option A, would read, ‘further accredits Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage (IPACIM) and Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association, to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee’.
87. The delegation of **Panama** remarked that Option A no longer applied, as the discussion centred on Mexico’s proposal, which already takes into account Option A. It therefore suggested to delete Option A and to leave Mexico’s proposal on the screen.
88. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
89. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** asked the Secretariat to clean the text of the draft decision projected on the screen and to list the countries that had supported Mexico’s proposal, as well as for the other Option A. The Assembly would then decide on the paragraphs as they appear.
90. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked thatPanama had been granted the first point of order. The Chairperson had decided to facilitate the presentation of the draft decision of the screen by having both versions highlighted in different colours. The full list of the supporting countries for the two versions were reintroduced to the draft decision on the screen.
91. The delegation of **Colombia** asked Mexico to reiterate its explanation and provide a clarification of its amendment so as to allay the concerns expressed by several of the delegations that had not expressed support. This clarification may help them in joining the consensus to support Mexico’s amendment, which simply sought to give the NGO concerned more time to resubmit its file so as to correct a few inaccuracies.
92. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
93. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** recalled the procedure that when a request is presented through a point of order the Chairperson must decide the point of order and follow through with the request to reintroduce the list of supporting countries alongside the options, thanking the Assistant Director-General for his contribution.
94. The **Chairperson** clarified that Panama had remarked on the difficulty in reading the draft decision and hence her suggestion to clean up the text and have a separate list of supporting countries for the sake of clarity. The Chairperson asked to revert to the original format, inviting Mexico to respond to Colombia’s request for further clarification of its amendment.
95. The delegation of **Mexico** thanked the Assembly for the unexpected time taken on this issue, explaining that it was concerned about the quality of NGOs being accredited in an advisory capacity to this Convention and why it looked into this issue in depth. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Institute in Mexico examined the NGO requests and found some inaccuracies in the statements made by Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association, in particular. Indeed, with this amendment, a full analysis and all relevant information will be published, including the requests by UNESCO Regional Offices that help contribute to the assessment of civil society organizations. This amendment was not an act against NGOs; it is an act of responsibility and commitment by Mexico to the framework of the Convention following its 16 years of experience in its implementation. In view of the time, the delegation suggested to hold a brief meeting with the delegations expressing a preference for Option A in order to provide them with further details so as to finalise this issue and come to a consensus.
96. The delegation of **Oman** remarked that since this amendment by Mexico was for the benefit of the file, it endorsed the proposal. It also agreed with the suggestion that Mexico provide an explanation to the delegations that still had some doubts about the amendment.
97. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** still feared the setting of a precedent but proposed a comprise amendment on behalf of the Netherlands and Switzerland, which would read, ‘invites Direct Gradual Development, Civil Association to resubmit, should it wish, a request for accreditation in a future cycle as it is not possible to ascertain whether the request as submitted under the 2021 cycle satisfied the criteria set out in paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives’.
98. The **Chairperson** thanked the Netherlands for its proposal.
99. The delegation of **Cuba** wished to be among the countries supporting Mexico’s amendment.
100. The **Chairperson** asked whether the delegations needed more time to read the Netherland’s proposed compromise text.
101. The delegation of **Mexico** did not wish to take up more time as there were other many important issues to discuss. It expressed thanks to the Netherlands for its proposal that presented a compromise text for those countries that had expressed doubts to its amendment. The delegation understood the concerns about setting a precedent. It therefore agreed to add the proposed amendment to the second paragraph of its own option in order to achieve consensus.
102. The **Chairperson** asked whether there were any objections to the new proposed wording.
103. The delegation of **Mali** supported Mexico's proposal and suggested that, instead of meeting with all the delegations, Mexico provides a document to the Secretariat explaining all its reservations in order to save time when the same proposal is submitted in a subsequent cycle.
104. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked thatall the documents pertaining to Mexico’s amendment had already been submitted to enable States Parties to make their decision. The Assistant Director-General summarised that there were four options. He remarked that the Chairperson had asked if any delegation had a comment or objected to the consensus version. The four options were: Option A [both NGOs are accredited]; Mexico’s option [only one of the NGOs is accredited]; the consensus proposal [by Mexico and the Netherlands]; and, in case of non-agreement, a consultation with Mexico and the delegations that disagreed with its proposal, with the request that they return after lunch with a consensus proposal.
105. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the clear summary. It was noted that there were no objections to Mexico’s option as amended by the Netherlands. The delegation thus suggested to move to its immediate adoption.
106. The delegation of **Ethiopia** agreed with Palestine that the amendment by Mexico was accepted, which together with the amendment by the Netherlands, would achieve consensus.
107. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Netherlands and Switzerland for their proposal, noting a minor wording issue in the French version.
108. The **Chairperson** took note of the consensus and asked whether there was any opposition to the new text.
109. The delegation of **Mexico** had no objection and expressed thanks to the Netherlands and Switzerland for their amendment.
110. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections to the new language, and paragraph 5 was duly adopted.
111. The **Assistant Director-General** reminded delegates about the timing of the vote for the election of the Committee Members, as well as the two side events taking place that day. The first was the meeting of the European Network of Focal Points of the 2003 Convention and the second was a presentation of the toolkit on requesting International Assistance from the Fund by the UNESCO Secretariat.

*[Wednesday, 6 July, afternoon session]*

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

**ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations to the afternoon session and a return of the debate on item 7, recalling that consensus had been reached on the amendment to paragraph 5. This demonstrated the capacity of the Assembly to find agreement on complex issues. She then proceeded to paragraph 6 in the draft resolution, ‘Encourages NGOs from under-represented Electoral Groups that meet the criteria for accreditation to submit their requests for accreditation at the earliest opportunity so as to improve the geographical distribution of accredited NGOs and invites States Parties from those Electoral Groups to make this call widely known among NGOs based within their territories’. A proposal by Palestine, a new paragraph 6 bis, would read, ‘Affirms that only NGOs from States Parties could be accredited and eligible for the Evaluation Body’.
2. The delegation of **Palestine** suggested first adopting paragraph 6, after which paragraph 6 bis could you discussed.
3. The **Chairperson** agreed with the point made, opening the floor.
4. The delegation of **Colombia** recalled the earlier debate in which there was common agreement on the importance of geographical balance. In this regard, it proposed an addition to paragraph 6 or a new paragraph, which would read, ‘Requests the Secretariat in consultation with States Parties, National Commissions and the ICH NGO Forum to submit to the next session a plan or strategy aimed at ensuring geographical balance among its NGOs’. The rationale behind this amendment was to produce a concrete solution on an issue on which all delegations had expressed concern.
5. The delegation of **Palestine** fully agreed with Colombia’s proposal and wished to add the following text, ‘including the possibility of adopting a quota per region’.
6. The delegation of **Kuwait** congratulated the Chairperson, adding that it strongly believed in the role of NGOs. The delegation remarked that the regional representative not only comes from NGOs, there are also experts, and so on. From the Secretariat’s chart [on the geographical distribution of NGOs)], currently, Group V (b) has 4% representation and Group III has 5%. The delegation thus agreed with having an action plan, results and an outcome, which would see this proportion increase in two years’ time. This results-oriented approach would thus result in a bigger pool of NGOs in under-represented Groups, providing a greater selection of NGOs. Kuwait thus supported Colombia’s amendment for a new paragraph 7.
7. The delegation of **Ethiopia** fully agreed with Colombia’s amendment as amended by Palestine, adding that the imbalance will continue and will likely increase if nothing is done. A strategy is indeed needed to correct this imbalance over time, which is a guarantee for inclusivity.
8. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** was happy to see Colombia’s proposal, which was in line with the morning’s discussion. It also thanked Kuwait and Palestine for their support.
9. The delegations of **Kazakhstan** and **Morocco** supported Colombia’s proposal, amended by Kuwait.
10. The delegation of **Lebanon** asked the Legal Adviser whether the Secretariat had a mandate to work in this way with the NGO Forum. If so, *would the plan then apply to the NGO Forum?*
11. The delegation of **Belgium** shared the concern regarding geographical imbalance. At the same time, it is most important to maintain the quality of the work that they bring to this Convention. In this regard, it did not share the idea of a quota.
12. The delegation of **Haiti** also supported Colombia's proposal for inclusiveness and representativeness for the regions, especially for its own country.
13. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** also supported Colombia’s proposal, as endorsed by a number of delegations. For the sake of consistency, the wording in the second part of the paragraph [in the amendment by Palestine] should read, ‘Electoral Groups’ in place of ‘region’.
14. The delegation of **Egypt** supported the proposal by Colombia.
15. The delegation of **Chile** congratulated the Chairperson and supported Colombia’s proposal. Having listened to the earlier debate, it believed that the Assembly should focus on Colombia’s proposal rather than reopening the debate on Palestine’s amendment. Moreover, Colombia’s proposal sufficiently covered the concerns raised by the delegations and would constitute a consensus [thereby not requiring Palestine’s amendment on the quota].
16. The delegation of **Czechia** fully understood the concerns expressed by delegations regarding the need for a balanced, geographical representation of NGOs. Nevertheless, it did not share the idea of a quota imposed by Electoral Group, as certain NGOs based in one region could work in another region. The delegation therefore preferred to base NGOs on the quality and skills of each instead of having strict quotas by region. It aligned with Belgium in this regard.
17. The delegation of **Uruguay** also supported Colombia’s proposal with the amendment proposed by Palestine, adding that the rationale behind Colombia’s proposal would ensure a balanced geographical distribution, which affects a number of regions. It also supported Chile remarks to move forward given the other important points yet to cover.
18. The delegation of **Algeria** supported Colombia’s proposal.
19. The delegation of **Democratic Republic of the Congo** supported Colombia’s proposal, which will undoubtedly lead to equitable geographical representation. In addition, although it could support the proposal concerning quotas, it must be combined with capacity-building for and among the NGOs of all regions. If quotas are to be applied, then the quality of the work proposed by NGOs must reflect expectations, otherwise this would be undesirable.
20. The **Chairperson** clarified that only the first part of paragraph 6 was under consideration.
21. The delegation of **Lithuania** noted a discrepancy in the numbering of paragraphs displayed on the screen between the two language versions. It supported Colombia’s original proposal (the new paragraph 7) ending with ‘NGOs’ with the assumption that this replaced Palestine’s amendment under paragraph 6 bis, as mentioned by Chile. The delegation was not in favour of adding a quota, as explained by Belgium and Czechia. It sought to have this reflected on the screen as a number of countries did not support the adoption of a quota because NGOs can be multinational, supranational and cannot be defined by their head office because they might be working on these issues in a different region.
22. The **Assistant Director-General** clarified thatparagraph 6 had not yet been approved. There was a paragraph 6 bis from Palestine [on the eligibility of NGOs from non-Party States], followed by a new paragraph 7 proposed by Colombia, to which Palestine had submitted an amendment [on the quota].
23. The delegation of **Palestine** agreed with the summary, however, as a matter of order and formality, Palestine’s original paragraph 6 bis should follow Colombia's proposal and become a new paragraph 7 bis.
24. The **Assistant Director-General** agreed withPalestine,thankingPalestine for its input
25. The delegation of **Slovakia** supported Colombia’s proposal, which was in line with Slovakia’s previous statement that the Assembly should look for concrete measures to find balance I geographical representation. As mentioned by Chile, Uruguay and others, the delegation hoped that this new paragraph 7 would be a good compromise and would thus replace Palestine’s proposal. It hesitated on the idea of a quota, along with Czechia and Belgium, as this should not pre-empt the content or results of consultations nor pose any restrictions.
26. The **Assistant Director-General** asked that the Assemblyconsiderallowing the Secretariat to reflect on this issue, as requested in the draft decision. In this way, the outcome of the study on geographical balance could be examined in a subsequent step.
27. The delegation of **Brazil** supported the proposed amendment by Colombia. Since 2000, Brazil has worked on local forms of organization in order to give autonomy to communities in the management of their heritage.
28. The delegation of **France** fully shared the goal of better geographical representation of NGOs, for which Colombia’s amendment appeared to be a good proposal. However, the Assembly had already extensively discussed the conditions necessary to accept requests from NGOs, with an overwhelming majority speaking in favour of greater selectivity and rigour in this regard. The difficulty was therefore how to reconcile the notion of a quota with greater selectivity. The delegation suggested that a better way might not be through quotas but through a guaranteed minimum representation, or something similar.
29. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** supported Colombia’s proposal with Palestine’s amendment [on eligibility of NGOs from non-Party States], but it did not support the use of quotas.
30. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** endorsed Colombia’s proposal. It wished to propose alternative text to Palestine’s proposal, explaining that it was not a question of imposing a quota *per se* but rather envisaging the *possibility* of applying a quota. Every time a document or report is requested from the Secretariat, the Assembly orients or guides the Secretariat in the direction it wished to see it take its proposal. The additional text would read, ‘including studying the implication of adopting a quota per Electoral Group’. This would not prejudge the decision to be taken in the future, instead it would simply guide the Secretariat to study the possibility of an effective mechanism to ensure more geographical representation of NGOs, which may not necessarily be a quota system.
31. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** supported Colombia’s proposal as amended by Palestine and supported by other States. With regard to the quota, it saw the merit of all the arguments voiced. As the proposal requests a study, and France had suggested a minimum number of NGOs, the delegation suggested to add, ‘and/or a minimum guaranteed number’, leaving it to the study to provide options, based on which the States Parties could then decide.
32. The delegation of **Estonia** endorsed the proposal of a plan or strategy for more inclusive geographical representation, a very important issue. However, the idea of a quota would be problematic from the perspective of inclusiveness and in the implementation of the Convention. Estonia therefore did not support this part of the paragraph. As a way out, the delegation suggested the creation of a working group on enhancing geographical representation.
33. The delegation of **Austria** supported the proposal by Colombia, and suggested that instead of a quota, the Assembly could consider an action plan for the Electoral Groups in order to achieve concrete balance. A working group could also be a possibility.
34. The delegation of **Madagascar** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, reiterating the proposal initially made by Palestine [on eligibility of NGOs from non-Party States], which was first considered and adopted under paragraph 6. Madagascar supported Colombia’s proposal.
35. The delegation of **Egypt** wished to add its support to Colombia’s proposal.
36. In an effort to save time, the delegation of **Morocco** suggested keeping paragraph 7 [Colombia’s amendment] with a small change in the request made to the Secretariat. It would first start with a plan then a strategy, followed by clear mechanisms to guarantee geographical representation. In this way, the amendment on the quota, which divided the Assembly, could be deleted. Indeed, the addition of ‘mechanisms’ could include the application of quotas, which would also be in line with the remarks made by the Assistant Director-General to not prejudge the results of the strategy and plan to be proposed by the Secretariat. Paragraph 7 would thus read, ‘requests the Secretariat, in consultation with States Parties, National Commissions and the ICH NGO Forum, to submit to the next session a plan, strategy and clear mechanisms aimed at ensuring balanced geographical representation between these NGOs’.
37. The **Chairperson** thanked Morocco for its useful proposal, asking the Assembly whether there were any objections to this new proposal by Morocco. There were no voiced objections. The Chairperson sought any objections to the amended paragraph 7 as a whole.
38. The delegation of **Ethiopia** fully supported the very good compromise proposal by Morocco. Many delegations had mentioned that quality would be compromised with diversity, however, the delegation strongly believed the opposite, that diversity guarantees quality. It is the lack of diversity that is hampering the quality necessary to represent all States Parties.
39. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order by Palestine.
40. The delegation of **Palestine** called a point of order, thanking Morocco for its consensual proposal. However, in terms of procedure, the Assembly had to first adopt the original paragraph 6 before moving to the adoption of the new paragraph 7.
41. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** supported the proposal by Colombia. As concerns the quotas, the delegation believed that the NGOs should in fact be consulted.
42. The **Assistant Director-General** presumed that Colombia’s proposal supposed working with the NGO Forum, as it would indeed be odd to impose a strategy on the Forum, not least as the intention is to work alongside NGOs as partners. Thus, any outcome would be decided in consultation with the ICH NGO Forum that already has experience on these matters. The Assistant Director-General asked Colombia whether this was the intention behind the proposal.
43. The delegation of **Colombia** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the explanation behind this proposal. Indeed, the Assembly wants NGOs to be more present, to leverage their potential in the work of the Convention, and to ensure they have the requisite maturity, which is reflected in their legal status. In addition to the Forum, the steering committee should also have good geographical balance. In other words, the delegation would like to see the NGOs follow a clear plan and strategy in this regard, as proposed by Morocco, as it was important to bring their ideas to the fore. With regard to the order of paragraphs, the delegation suggested to reverse the order so that current paragraph 7 [Colombia’s proposal] would become 6 [‘encourages NGOs from under-represented Electoral Groups’] and vice versa. This would be more logical, as first there is an expression of concern followed by a request for a solution. The Assembly could then continue with paragraph 7 bis proposed by Palestine.
44. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** remarked that the interesting debate had resulted in a very favourable consensus. It thanked Morocco for its proposal, as the idea of the mechanism was indeed very important as it will determine the content of the consultations. The Assembly had agreed on the principles and must now move on to the mechanisms. It also found France’s proposal, supported by Saudi Arabia, very relevant with regard to having a minimum number [of NGOs]. If this was not introduced in the draft resolution, the delegation wished to have it included in the summary records, thus highlighting the importance of reaching a minimum number of NGOs from under-represented Electoral Groups in the Evaluation Body.
45. The delegation of **Poland** thanked Colombia for its wise proposal and also Morocco for finding a solution. Indeed, this is an extremely important subject and the delegation supported this amendment with the understanding that this is an alternative to Palestine’s amendment, as mentioned by some delegations, such as Chile. It believed that the Assembly should first focus on the research to establish an action plan, after which it can take steps forward.
46. The **Chairperson** then turned to paragraph 6 [Colombia’s proposal]. With no objections, it was duly adopted. There were no objections to paragraph 7 [‘Encourages NGOs from under-represented Electoral Groups’], which was duly adopted. The Chairperson then turned to paragraph 7 bis by Palestine, which would read, ‘Affirms that only NGOs from States Parties could be accredited and eligible for the Evaluation Body’.
47. The delegation of **Palestine** clarified that this amendment aimed to encourage States not Party to the Convention with NGOs in the Forum (or that have NGOs interested in obtaining accreditation) to push their States in ratifying the Convention. On a matter of principle, the delegation believed it was unacceptable that States obtain benefits without any obligations. In this regard, the delegation asked the President of the Forum whether such measures as preventing NGOs from being accredited or from being elected to the Evaluation Body would help NGOs by encouraging their governments to ratify the Convention. It was recalled that the 13 States not Party to the Convention principally came from Group I and, as democratic countries, civil societies could strongly influence their governments.
48. The **Chairperson** invited Mr Turgeon of the ICH NGO Forum to respond to the question.
49. The **President of the ICH NGO Forum**, **Mr Laurier Turgeon**, thanked Palestine for asking this very important question and also giving NGOs an opportunity to speak and provide some information to contribute to the discussion. Mr Turgeon came from Canada, a country that has not yet ratified the Convention, and the fact that Canadian NGOs are able to participate is indeed helpful in lobbying Canada to ratify the Convention. This was probably also the case in many other countries that have not yet signed the Convention. Having the possibility of accredited NGOs participating is very helpful in convincing governments to sign the Convention because NGOs are better equipped to discuss the Convention with governments, letting them know what is expected. But it is also reassuring for governments to know that accredited NGOs in the country have experience with the Convention and that it could operationalize very quickly. Mr Turgeon thanked the delegates for the proposal that the ICH NGO Forum participate in the development of a strategy and action plan because they have a lot to bring to the table. Indeed, this issue has been taken very seriously in the last two years. The Forum has a working group that has already worked very seriously on this issue, having devised an action plan, which it could submit for the Assembly’s consideration. The Forum has conducted 54 one-on-one interviews with NGOs from under-represented regions to try to understand how it could help them better recruit more NGOs, but also to help NGOs with mundane things like filling in the application forms, raising awareness in those countries, and making the benefits of accreditation better known. The Forum would very much like to contribute to that discussion.
50. The **Chairperson** turned to 7 bis proposed by Palestine, which would read, ‘Affirms that only NGOs from States Parties could be accredited and eligible for the Evaluation Body’, opening the floor for comments.
51. The delegation of **Grenada** returned to the point made by the Assistant Director-General that NGOs had been accredited in past that were not affiliated to States Parties and that this in fact encouraged Member States to ratify the Convention. Now, 20 years on, as strategies change, the delegation believed that not allowing accredited NGOs to join the Evaluation Body, for instance, or not allowing them to pronounce on whether an element can be inscribed may also in fact encourage Member States to ratify the Convention. The delegation recalled that the Committee sought to have more information on NGOs in order to qualify for accreditation, when it decided in Decision 16.COM 15, ‘Requests the Secretariat to put in place a clear communication mechanism with the States Parties that allows it to obtain as much information as possible on requests for accreditation […].’ The delegation remarked on the fact that it clearly stated ‘States Parties’ and not UNESCO ‘Member States’. Thus, if only States Parties are addressed when seeking more information, *who then should be addressed when seeking more information from NGOs not affiliated with a State Party?* For this reason, the delegation supported the proposal by Palestine in 7 bis.
52. The delegation of **Oman** thanked all the speakers and noted the long discussion on this item. It therefore sought a solution on Palestine’s proposal. Concerning accredited NGOs and the eligibility of NGOs to participate in the Evaluation Body, the delegation believed that a compromise could be reached by which the Assembly could agree to welcome accreditations of NGOs even from non-Party States, but to temporarily postpone their possible election to the Evaluation Body until the next General Assembly when a solution can be found.
53. The **Chairperson** invited the Legal Adviser to provide some legal counsel on the proposed measures.
54. The **Legal Adviser** spoke of his honour to serve this Assembly under the Chairperson’s leadership. The proposal on the screen posed two sets of legal questions. The first question concerned the legal texts with respect to the accreditation of NGOs having their established domicile in a State not Party to the Convention, and it thus concerned accreditation. The second question was whether such NGOs could be eligible to be appointed as members of the Evaluation Body. The applicable framework is Article 9 of the Convention, which concerns the accreditation of advisory organizations, and it provides in paragraph 1 that, ‘The Committee shall propose to the General Assembly the accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with recognized competence in the field of the intangible cultural heritage to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee.’ Paragraph 2 reads, ‘The Committee shall also propose to the General Assembly the criteria for and modalities of such accreditation’. The criteria for and modalities of NGO accreditations are therefore laid out in section III, paragraph 2 of the Operational Directives which, pursuant to Article 7(e) of the Convention, were prepared by the Committee and then approved by the General Assembly. In particular, paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives identifies five criteria for the accreditation of NGOs which include *inter alia*, the requirement that these NGOs have a local, national, regional or international nature, as appropriate, as well as an established domicile and recognized legal personality as compatible with domestic law. Paragraph 93 provides that in receiving and examining requests for NGO accreditation the Committee shall pay due attention to the principle of equitable geographic representation based on information provided to it by the Secretariat.
55. The **Legal Adviser** continued that the procedure for accreditation in paragraph 97 requires that the NGO submit to the Secretariat precise information which includes its full address and the name of the country or countries in which it is active. Therefore, section III, paragraph 2 of the Operational Directives, which is the applicable legal framework on accreditation, does not contain any explanative provision barring an NGO which has been established or has its established domicile in a State not Party to the Convention. Indeed, the Secretariat and, in particular, the Assistant Director-General had already explained that NGOs that did not have their established domicile in a State Party had been accredited in the past, as also mentioned by the President of NGO Forum. As for the question as to whether an NGO may be eligible for appointment to the Evaluation Body without an established domicile in a State Party, the applicable provision is in paragraph 27 of the Operational Directives, which states, ‘The Evaluation Body shall be composed of twelve members appointed by the Committee: six experts qualified in the various fields of the intangible cultural heritage representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee and six accredited nongovernmental organizations, taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and various domains of intangible cultural heritage’. This provision clearly states that the six experts of the Evaluation Body shall be representatives of States Parties, not members of the Committee, and paragraph 28 also indicates that the Secretariat ‘shall inform the States Parties within each Electoral Group with a vacancy to be filled’ for the purposes of elections. These provisions do not contain any explicit requirement that only NGOs having their domicile in a State Party are eligible for appointment to the Evaluation Body. The Secretariat had also explained the practices regarding participation of such NGOs on the Evaluation Body. This provided the comprehensive overview of the legal framework on this matter.
56. The **Chairperson** thanked the Legal Adviser and continued with the rest of the speakers list.
57. The delegation of **Lebanon** reiterated its question: *What would be the nature of the legal relationship between the Secretariat and the NGO Forum? Can the Assembly impose a decision concerning a plan or strategy on the Forum? Does the Forum have the right to refuse these recommendations?*
58. The **Legal Adviser** explained that the NGO Forum is not mentioned either in the Convention or in the Operational Directives, but both mention the accreditation of NGOs. The NGO Forum is an association that was formed in the margins of this Convention and is comprised of NGOs accredited to the Convention. From a legal point of view, what matters is not so much the relationship with the NGO Forum, which has developed in practice, but in fact the relationship with the NGOs that are accredited with an advisory function. It is therefore in these terms that the question arises. As for the question of what can be imposed or refused, the Legal Adviser noted that the preceding proposal, which had been adopted by the Assembly, concerned the criteria for the accreditation of NGOs. As such, in reality, this is already imposed on the NGOs as the Assembly has the authority – on the basis of recommendations made to it by the Committee in the first instance – to establish the criteria for accreditation, and then, to make the decision on the accreditation of NGOs.
59. The delegation of **Estonia** returned to the notion of competence and expertise in the various domains of intangible cultural heritage as this was also an important consideration, which was discussed earlier. Estonia did not support the amendment proposed by Palestine. NGOs are nongovernmental by definition and what matters is their proven competence and expertise in the various domains of intangible cultural heritage. Many of the NGOs also have a regional or international nature and their domicile does not tie them exclusively to a particular country. Estonia therefore maintained its position.
60. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** thankedthe Chairperson for her excellent management of the Assembly’s work as well as the Legal Adviser for his comprehensive explanation. The delegation returned to the intervention by Oman that made the distinction between accreditation and representation within the Evaluation Body, which was an interesting perspective. Syria supported the proposal made by Palestine because the basic concern was to achieve fairness, equity and an equitable, balanced representation of NGOs within the Evaluation Body and within the large body of accredited NGOs with an advisory capacity to the Convention and the Committee. The delegation fully understood the interventions concerning expertise and obviously an NGO with no expertise has no place in the Convention. It was also obvious that all NGOs likely to be part of the Evaluation Body will have excellent expertise in their field. The delegation asked the Legal Adviser whether there was anything in Palestine’s proposal that would prevent it from being adopted from a legal standpoint.
61. The **Legal Adviser** explained that the Convention indicates, in paragraph 2 of Article 9, that the Committee proposes to the General Assembly the criteria and methods of accreditation. The General Assembly can therefore establish criteria and procedures for the accreditation of NGOs as it wishes and, moreover, it has done so through the Operational Directives and, in particular, in Article 91 to Article 99 [concerning NGOs].
62. The delegation of **France** understood Palestine’s concern expressed through this amendment. However, there were two considerations. The first was a question of principle. NGOs are by definition non-governmental, and to attach the idea that they are associated with a State would be difficult to accept in a decision by the General Assembly. Secondly, the earlier amendment, which aims to launch a reflection process on a mechanism that would make it possible to improve NGO representation, could respond to this concern, including with regard to matters of accreditation and the Evaluation Body, which could be dealt with in this reflection.
63. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the Legal Adviser for his clear explanations as to the non-compatibility of the amendment with the current provisions of the Operational Directives. The delegation concluded that the corresponding Article 27 and Article 91 would have to be amended to adopt the amendment. Moreover, the Open-ended working group, which had worked for two years on the Operational Directives, with the support of Japan, did not make any recommendations regarding the accreditation and eligibility of NGOs to serve on the Evaluation Body. On the contrary, it recommended to confirm the composition and functioning of the Evaluation Body. The delegation did not see why the work of the working group should now be questioned, for no reason, and hence its opposition to Palestine’s amendment.
64. The delegation of **Czechia** hadlistened carefully to the explanations by the Assistant Director-General, the President of the NGO Forum and the Legal Adviser regarding the participation of NGOs from States not party to the Convention, and it did not wish to change the rules of inclusiveness currently followed and which are quite clear with regard to the establishment of the Evaluation Body. The delegation echoed the remarks made by Estonia and Switzerland, and also spoke in favour of the diversity of non-governmental partners in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage for the benefit of sharing their knowledge and skills. The delegation therefore did not support Palestine’s amendment and wished to return to the original text.
65. The delegation of **Belgium** echoed the interventions made by Estonia, Czechia and Switzerland and supported the work of NGOs in the Convention. NGOs are non-governmental and therefore it also supported the accreditation of NGOs domiciled in States not party to the Convention. It did not support Palestine’s amendment.
66. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation based on the text, but it was unclear whether the current texts explicitly allows NGOs that are not domiciled in States Parties to be accredited. The delegation was of the understanding that there was nothing that explicitly allows them to be accredited nor that explicitly prevents them from being accredited. The question was therefore: *Is there specific text in the current texts that allows or prohibits NGOs to be accredited?* From a legal standpoint, this was a grey area. When there are grey areas in legal texts, it is the General Assembly that can pronounce and decide.
67. The **Legal Adviser** recalled Article 9, paragraph 2, which mentions the fact that the Assembly must establish the criteria for the accreditation of NGOs. The Assembly achieves this in paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives, which includes five criteria. These criteria refer to domicile, but they do not include the criterion that domicile must be in a State Party to the Convention. Thus, they do not explicitly allow it nor do they explicitly prevent it, but there are five criteria, which do not include that element. Furthermore, in the context of the interpretation of texts, in particular, international conventions and treaties, the text itself is relied on, but also in the subsequent practice in the application and interpretation of the text. On this practice, the Legal Adviser recalled that the Secretariat had already provided information during the current session. He also recalled the response to the question by Syria on the competences of this Assembly.
68. The delegation of **Palestine** understood that there was clear support for the accreditation of NGOs but there was also clear opposition for their election to the Evaluation Body. If there is flexibility in this regard, the delegation suggested going along with the proposal by Oman, which is NGOs continue to be accredited but election to the Evaluation Body is reserved only for NGOs from States Parties to the Convention.
69. The delegation of **Cyprus** suggested tosuspend the discussion until the following day given the number of important items still on n the agenda that had yet to be discussed.
70. The **Chairperson** noted Cyprus’ suggestion to suspend the discussion on paragraph 7 bis of the draft decision and to return to this discussion the next day, along with paragraph 4.
71. The delegation of **Palestine** preferred to conclude the item rather than restart the next day.
72. Thedelegation of **Cyprus** disagreed with Palestine but would agree to 10 more minutes, after which the Assembly should tackle the other items.
73. The **Chairperson** remarked that Cyprus proposed to spend 10 minutes on this matter as there were other items to be addressed.
74. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** preferred to finalize the discussion during this session as it was the most productive way forward. Furthermore, it is the Bureau that sets the amount of time given to any discussion and the Assembly should respect the Bureau’s mandate. The delegation suggested to first go through the speakers list, after which, if there is no consensus, to take a 10-minute break to allow the Assembly time to produce a consensual text.
75. The **Chairperson** agreed to the compromise to allow all the delegations a chance to speak before returning to 7 bis, reminding the delegations of the time limit.
76. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** thanked the Chairperson for her patience. It wished to support Palestine’s proposal but it could also support the proposal by Oman, which deserved to be taken into consideration given that the discussion earlier mentioned paragraph 93 of the Operational Directives, which states that ‘the Committee shall pay due respect to the principle of equitable geographical representation’. The delegation explained that there were NGO representatives from States not Party to the Convention yet there were 180 States Parties. It therefore wondered why there was such concern whether they are affiliated with a State Party or not. The delegation insisted that the issue concerned having better representation among NGOs from under-represented regions. The delegation believed that Colombia’s adopted proposal actually did a lot more to address this issue of balance. As a way forward, the delegation suggested to continue to allow the accreditation of NGOs from States not Party to the Convention but, as a minimum, they are *not* eligible to serve the Evaluation Body.
77. The delegation of **Poland** thanked the Legal Adviser for providing clarity on the provisions of the Convention and Operational Directives. Poland supported Estonia and Switzerland and agreed with Estonia that NGOs have a specific and essential role in the implementation of the Convention. It also fully agreed with Estonia that NGOs are nongovernmental, and it thanked the Legal Adviser for reminding the Assembly of Article 9 of the Convention, which very clearly stipulates the specific tasks regarding the accreditation of the NGOs, ‘the Committee shall propose to the General Assembly […]’. This means that it is the Committee that verifies the accreditation of the NGOs, which is followed by the General Assembly. This is the stage when the eligibility of NGOs to the Evaluation Body is decided. Poland could not therefore support Palestine’s proposal, joining the list of countries opposing this amendment.
78. The delegation of **Slovakia** believed that that the newly adopted paragraph 7 sufficiently addressed the concerns raised by Palestine. It was therefore not in favour of including paragraph 7 bis in the draft decision. The President of the NGO Forum clearly stated that the possibility of accreditation of NGOs from non-Party States actually encouraged them to become a Party to the Convention. In addition, the Legal Adviser clearly stated that nothing prevented an NGO from serving on the Evaluation Body. Thus it was not possible to pick and choose what to follow in the Operational Directives with regard to accreditation, and then not respect their election to the Evaluation Body. The Assembly should adhere to the rules, as they are clear on this point.
79. The delegation of **Morocco** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation, adding, however, that things were not that clear, as shown in paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives. Taking a constructive approach, the delegation agreed that all NGOs can be accredited. What is problematic is paragraph 27 of the Operational Directives. It refers twice to ‘States Parties’ when discussing eligibility to the Evaluation Body and makes no reference whatsoever to organizations that are domiciled in a State not party to the Convention. As for the criteria outlined in paragraph 91 of the Operational Directives, this does not pose a problem if taken in a positive and constructive way. Obviously, the question of inclusiveness is important, even though – as had been pointed out – there are 180 States Parties to this Convention, i.e. there is a sufficient number of NGOs to represent the NGO Forum in a professional and competent way, including within the Evaluation Body. Conversely, paragraph 27 clearly refers to States Parties and not States not Party to the Convention. The question of eligibility to the Evaluation Body therefore clearly poses a problem. Accreditation is not a problem, but eligibility to the Evaluation Body clearly is and it is not legally supported by the Operational Directives. This was the delegation’s understanding from the explanations provided by the Legal Adviser.
80. The delegation of **Lithuania** did not support Palestine’s amendment. Colombia’s proposal in the newly adopted paragraph 6 covered this issue as it requested an action plan and strategy to help redress the geographical imbalance, and it could also cover the topic of eligibility. The Evaluation Body is comprised of six experts delegated by States Parties and six members from NGOs that cannot and should not be defined by their physical headquarters. This is the reason Lithuania could not agree with this paragraph.
81. The delegation of **Panama** noted that 25 States Parties had requested the floor, which means at least a further 50 minutes of discussion, adding that with so many arguments, the Assembly was unlikely to come to an agreement during the afternoon session, especially as many States consider that Palestine’s proposal warranted interest. There was thus a need to consult with the Secretariat in order to get a better understanding of the legal aspects of this proposal. The delegation thus proposed to suspend this discussion on Palestine’s proposal and to create an Open-ended working group that would report to the next Assembly on the positive and negative aspects of this proposal. The delegation found the discussion to be very important because some regions do not have as much representation in the NGO Forum as other regions. States have NGOs affiliated with non-Party States moving around freely in their countries because they have been accredited by the Assembly. However, these States do not need them because they do not come from Member States. Nevertheless, the delegation understood why some States Parties felt that this type of measure might also limit the free movement of NGOs, which nobody wants to do. The Assembly values and supports collaboration with the NGOs. Given the importance of this issue, the delegation requested to put this proposal aside and continue with the resolution and accreditation of the 32 NGOs that have been approved by the Committee and were awaiting endorsement by the Assembly.
82. The **Chairperson** thanked Panama for the points raised. Noting that the Assembly was behind schedule, she proposed to suspend item 7 so that the delegations can undertake necessary consultations on paragraph 7 bis and come back with an agreed text in the next session.
83. The delegation of **Palestine** did not see how delegations could come to an agreed text without deciding on a working group or something similar. The delegation therefore suggested that the Chairperson request a maximum of one or two representatives from each Electoral Group to convene on this question and to come back to the Assembly with its conclusions.
84. The **Chairperson** remarked that there were two proposals. Panama had proposed an Open-ended working group and Palestine had proposed that the Electoral Groups appoint two or more representatives to join a working group.
85. The delegation of **Kuwait** supported Panama’s proposal, adding that this issue was not clearcut and more time was needed. It therefore supported deleting 7 bis from the draft decision and moving forward as suggested by Panama.
86. The **Assistant Director-General** noted the proposal by Panama and supported by Kuwait that the Chairpersons of the Electoral Groups invite two or more members of their Group to come together to draft a consensual proposal for discussion the following day. The Assistant Director-General allocated a room for this purpose.
87. The delegation of **Cuba** did not see Panama’s proposal reflected in the discussion, adding that this was a more deep-seated issue than the simple drafting of a proposal. This morning’s discussion on the accreditation of a couple of NGOs had sparked a very important discussion on the entire involvement and accreditation of NGOs in the Convention that deserved the full attention of the Assembly, irrespective of the decision taken. The delegation was not against the Chairperson’s suggestion but felt that this issue amounted to more than just the wording.
88. The **Assistant Director-General** clarified thatPanama’s suggestion to form a working group is common when there is no consensus in the room. Cuba mentioned that there is a substantial, underlying issue. The proposal was to suspend the discussion on paragraph 7 bis, as had been the case with paragraph 4. The Assistant Director-General asked whether the proposal for the working group would discuss both paragraphs 4 and 7 bis or only paragraph 7 bis, with a suggestion to move to the adoption of paragraphs 8 and 9 and then return to the suspended paragraphs.
89. The delegation of **Panama** fully agreed with the understanding.
90. The delegation of **Palestine** fully agreed with the proposal by the Assistant Director-General, however, there were two proposals. Panama proposed an Open-ended working group, which has a high financial cost and would take place after the General Assembly, whereas Palestine proposed a small group of members to complete the work the next day. It agreed with the Assistant Director-General to first adopt paragraphs 8 and 9 and to suspend paragraphs 4 and 7 bis until later in the session when the Assembly will receive the consensus proposal. The delegation suggested to convene the delegations that might be interested in taking part in the working group after the adoption of the two paragraphs.
91. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** had two observations. Firstly, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s name, among others, were not listed as one of the States supporting Palestine’s amendment. Secondly, it thanked the Assistant Director-General for his proposal and, as paragraphs 4 and 7 bis were connected to this discussion, it could support the idea of a working group to meet the next day, which could be a limited working group. But if there is no consensus or clear decision at the end, then an Open-ended working group might be needed intersession, i.e. before the next General Assembly. In the meantime, the Assembly could continue with the current practice, which is that all NGOs are welcome except those that not domiciled in States Parties. That way, the Assembly would be true to practice and can deal with the issue at the next General Assembly.
92. The delegation of **Switzerland** supported the proposal made by the Assistant Director-General and relayed by Palestine, namely, to organize a consultation group the next day to help reach a consensus proposal in relation to paragraph 7 bis. It seemed completely premature to envisage an Open-ended working group. The subject is certainly important, but the Assembly would have to agree on the modalities and financing of this Open-ended group, and this was not the time to make such a decision. The delegation called on all States Parties to support the proposal of an informal group, after which the modalities can be done in a flexible way so as to conclude and find a solution by the next day.
93. The delegation of **Japan** had chaired a number of meetings in 2021 and in cases like this there were only two options: informal consultations or an Open-ended working group. In this particular case, the delegation felt that it would be impossible to agree on this matter by the next day and suggested that an Open-ended working group take up this issue. On the question of accreditation, the delegation noted that even Palestine was flexible, and it therefore suggested to concentrate on NGO eligibility to the Evaluation Body. Moreover, a working group had been created to work on the broader implications of Article 18 to be chaired by Sweden. The most important role of this working group was to discuss the role of NGOs, so it was perfectly suitable for this group to continue this discussion and therefore not waste any more time on this issue at this moment. Of course, unless there was opposition, Sweden’s working group would be the best forum to discuss this issue. Given the divisive nature of this debate, the delegation reiterated that it would be impossible for delegations to agree by tomorrow.
94. The delegation of **Panama** could agree with taking out 7 bis and creating an Open-ended working group to further discuss this issue. However, following the intervention by Japan, it was not clear whether the proposal was to include this item in the already existing Open-ended group or to create a new one. Either way, paragraph 7 bis had to be suspended so that the Assembly could finish discussing the draft resolution. In addition, the [informal] working group would meet the next day and decide whether the topic will be added onto the agenda of the next Assembly. The delegation did not wish to pre-empt the group’s decision and thus it would be better to create an Open-ended working group and only have paragraph 7 bis as the topic of discussion. Concerning paragraph 4 on the pending accreditation of the 32 NGOs, the delegation did not believe that this point should be hijacked in this way. As a member of the Committee that had endorsed their accreditation, based on the present rules, Panama proposed that the Assembly adopt paragraph 4, with any new decision taken in the Open-ended group to apply to future accreditations when the next Assembly adopts the new rules.
95. The **Chairperson** noted that there were several proposals on the floor with the same objective, inviting the Assistant Director-General to find a solution.
96. The **Assistant Director-General** summarized the options in an effort to move forward. There was a proposal to create an informal working group with two or more members, chosen by the Chairpersons of each Group to work on paragraph 7 bis. If no solution was found then the item would be suspended until the next Assembly session. The Assistant Director-General suggested that the limited informal working group be tasked with finding a solution rather than creating more Open-ended groups. On a second point, the Assistant Director-General noted that it was the prerogative of the Assembly, if it so wished, to change the rules together with the Committee, but currently, paragraph 4 was not under discussion. He recalled that paragraphs 8 and 9 were still pending, as well as other outstanding items on the agenda.
97. Noting the time, the delegation of **Kuwait** called a point of order, summarizing the options. There was the option of a working group the next day. Panama’s option to have an Open-ended working group, and the suggestion by Japan that the topic be added to the mandate of the Open-ended working group working on NGO matters. The Assembly therefore had to take a direction to move forward.
98. The delegation of **Palestine** proposed to move to the adoption of paragraphs 8 and 9, as mentioned by the Assistant Director-General. In terms of the three proposals, the delegation suggested starting with the limited working group to meet the next day to see if it can reach a consensus. If not, the Assembly could follow the advice of Japan and Panama’s proposal to create another Open-ended working group, although it might be difficult for financial and other practical reasons. Or the Assembly could follow the proposal by Japan [to include this issue to the already existing Open-ended working group on Article 18]. The delegation proposed to start with the adoption of items 8 and 9, after which the Chairperson could appoint one of the delegations (for example, Ethiopia or Japan) to chair this limited working group.
99. The **Chairperson** noted four more speakers on the list.
100. The delegation of **Palestine** proposed to close the debate.
101. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections and closed the debate.
102. The delegation of **Netherlands** asked which countries would be part of the working group.
103. The **Chairperson** recognized the wisdom of Palestine’s proposal to start with a smaller group, comprising two to three representatives per Electoral Group.
104. The delegation of **Mexico** noted that paragraph 4 of the draft decision had been suspended. As it was linked to paragraph 5, and not paragraph 7, it wondered whether the Secretariat could make the adjustments concerning the NGOs in paragraph 4.
105. The **Chairperson** invited Panama to speak before addressing Mexico’s question.
106. The delegation of **Panama** wished to make an amendment to paragraph 8 of the draft decision, which was not related to Mexico’s or Palestine’s interventions. In relation to paragraph 8, in which it says, ‘Reminds the NGOs accredited in 2010, 2014 and 2018 that they are to submit a report every four years’, the delegation wished to add, ‘and decides on its future relations with the Convention as established by Article 95 of the Operational Directives’. The delegation asked: *what would be the purpose of an NGO that had not reported since 2010 or 2014?* *What reason would it come to the Committee with a report for review?* The Committee should therefore decide whether the relations with this NGO will continue or not based on Article 95 of the Operational Directives.
107. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order by Poland.
108. The delegation of **Poland** apologized for the interruption but the Assembly had still not decided whether or not it wished to create a limited working group the next day because there were still several name plates raised. With regard to paragraph 7 bis proposed by Palestine, it wanted to hear from the Legal Adviser whether the text in 7 bis contradicted Article 27 of the Operational Directives.
109. The **Legal Adviser** replied that it would depend on how Article 27 is read, adding that he had already explained the legal framework to the Committee. It was up to the Assembly to interpret what is written and whether it would be contradictory. The Legal Adviser asked Poland in what way did it consider the paragraph contradictory.
110. The delegation of **Poland** explained that Palestine’s proposal excludes some NGOs from serving in the Evaluation Body, i.e. those from States not Party to the Convention. This would mean that the Operational Directives would have to be changed because currently Article 27 states that any NGO that is accredited can be elected to the Evaluation Body. Thus, paragraph 7 bis would exclude a group of NGOs that are actually eligible to serve the Evaluation Body.
111. The **Legal Adviser** confirmed that the Operational Directives in paragraph 27 does not indicate that NGOs, which have their established domicile in a State not Party to the Convention, are ineligible to serve the Evaluation Body. Article 27 only refers to the six accredited NGOs. In this respect, Poland’s observation was indeed correct.
112. The **Chairperson** returned to the issue of establishing a smaller working group to discuss paragraph 7 bis, asking the Assembly whether it approved.
113. The delegation of **Grenada** remarked that Poland was referring to 7 bis but the proposal on the screen was not the proposal made by Oman as it referred to NGOs from non-Party States that can be neither accredited nor eligible. The delegation and others had accepted the proposal by Oman [on accreditation], which could therefore form the basis of the discussion. In addition, Article 27 could be changed to include, ‘on an experimental basis’, if needed.
114. The **Chairperson** reiterated its proposal for a smaller working group on the basis of the proposal by Palestine in paragraph 7 bis.
115. The delegation of **Morocco** remarked that the original paragraph 7 bis was no longer relevant as the issue of accreditation had been settled. The issue concerned the eligibility of NGOs to serve the Evaluation Body, and thus the wording in paragraph in 7 bis should be corrected.
116. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** wished to know whether the group would be limited to two or three members.
117. The **Chairperson** explained that there was some flexibility in assigning an appropriate ratio depending on the size of the delegations.
118. The delegation of **Palestine** asked to appoint a Chairperson immediately and proposed Japan to chair this limited working group.
119. The delegation of **Japan** remarked that it was too pessimistic about the outcome of this working group and nominated Ethiopia or Kuwait.
120. The delegation of **India** wished the Assembly a quick resolution to this impasse and supported the proposal for Ethiopia to chair the working group.
121. The **Chairperson** noted that Ethiopia was the people’s choice.
122. The delegation of **Ethiopia** remarked that Japan had extensive knowledge of working groups and was better suited.
123. The delegation of **Djibouti** reiterated that there should be three countries per Group and chaired by co-chairs Ethiopia and Japan. It also asked that the working group also review paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, including paragraph 4 of the draft decision so as to come up with a clear proposal. In addition, the floor should not be given to the same delegations on numerous occasions as there was still a full agenda to discuss.
124. The **Chairperson** sought the views of the Assembly regarding the Djibouti’s proposal.
125. The delegation of **Panama** did not agree with Djibouti’s proposal as the working group was created to only examine 7 bis. The rest of the paragraphs in this draft resolution have to be decided in this present session.
126. The **Assistant Director-General** noted that as an informal group it did not require a chair if there were no volunteers, especially as it involved the examination of one sole point with the aim to find a common agreement. The Assistant Director-General noted that Djibouti had opened a new debate with the proposed examination in the working group of paragraphs 8, 9 and 4 in addition to paragraph 7 bis, although some delegations expressed opposition. He asked whether the two co-Chairs could agree to co-chair the group.
127. The **Chairperson** noted that Ethiopia and Japan accepted to co-chair the group.
128. The delegation of **Palestine** suggested to move to paragraphs 8 and 9.
129. The delegation of **Morocco** remarked that they are not co-chairs but rather facilitators, adding that their nomination was an excellent choice because of their wisdom and ability to overcome difficulties and find a way out of this impasse. The delegation supported to move to the adoption of paragraphs 8 and 9 and thus end the day on a positive note.
130. The delegation of **Colombia** congratulated the co-chairs, thanking them for their support. It sought to return to paragraphs 8 and 9 and paragraph 4, which had already been decided by the Committee, as explained by Panama. In this way, there would be no retroactive application of any decision taken under 7 bis, meaning that only 7 bis will be discussed by the working group, allowing the other paragraphs to be adopted.
131. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order by Palestine.
132. The delegation of **Palestine** requested that paragraph 4 be adopted before resolving paragraph 7 bis because they were still connected to the question of accreditation and eligibility, at least until the Assembly reached a consensus. The delegation could agree on the issue of accreditation if the Assembly could reach a consensus on the issue of election. In the meantime, paragraph 4 would remain suspended until paragraph 7 bis was resolved.
133. The **Chairperson** proposed to adopt paragraphs 8 and 9 and return to paragraphs 7 bis and 4 the next day. Paragraph 8 would read, ‘Reminds the NGOs accredited in 2010, 2014 and 2018 that they are to submit their quadrennial report to the Secretariat before the deadline of 15 February 2023 so that the eighteenth session of the Committee can review the contributions and commitment of each advisory organization’. It was noted that Panama had proposed to add a text, which would read, ‘and decide on their future relations with the Convention as established by the guidelines of paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives’.
134. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** thanked Panama for its proposal but preferred to delete it because, over the last three hours, it was clear that there is a diversity of interpretations in the relationship with NGOs. In addition, the Assembly did not know the outcome of the informal working group decision and thus it would be easier to simply delete the amendment.
135. The delegation of **Panama** believed it to be an important and necessary amendment to comply with paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives. The reports submitted by NGOs give legitimacy to their competence and work on the ground with the communities. NGOs have to report every four years, but some NGOs have failed to submit reports, yet the role of the Committee is to receive and examine the reports and decide on their future relations, as stated in paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives. At no moment during this debate were there any doubts expressed about paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives. Palestine’s proposal did not relate or affect paragraph 95. Panama therefore disagreed with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s proposal to withdraw its amendment, adding that it was necessary to look not only at the work done by NGOs but also decide on the future of the relations between those NGOs and the Convention.
136. The **Chairperson** asked the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela whether it was willing to retract its proposal considering the determination of Panama to maintain its amendment.
137. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** understood the concerns expressed by Panama and suggested looking at the wording to simplify it. Rather than ‘and decide on their future relations’, the delegation proposed, ‘bearing in mind what is established in paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives’. In this way, allaying Panama’s concerns, while also avoiding prejudgements or any outcome from the informal group discussion.
138. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** thanked Panama and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their explanations, agreeing that Panama’s proposal was indeed very relevant. In the spirit of consensus, the revised amendment by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was acceptable. Before the intervention of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the delegation had wished to draw attention to the fact that the sentence lacked reference to a very specific situation in which NGOs accredited in 2010 and later in 2014 had not yet submitted their reports and were therefore in breach of paragraph 95 of the Operational Directives. But it could also agree to simply refer to the Operational Directives in the resolution.
139. The **Chairperson** asked Panama whether it could accept the new proposal by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
140. Given the limited time, the delegation of **Panama** was willing to accept the proposal.
141. The **Chairperson** noted no objections to the adoption of paragraph 8 with the amended language and it was duly adopted. She turned to paragraph 9, which would read, ‘Takes note of the proposals on the treatment of accreditation and renewal requests from NGOs, namely the timing of the publication of such requests and the involvement of UNESCO Field Offices. With no comments or objections, paragraph 9 was adopted. The discussion of the remaining paragraphs was suspended until the next day and the outcomes of the informal discussion.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

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

1. The **Chairperson** informed the Assembly that the ballots had been counted. She thanked the tellers, Ms Paola Gómez Barletta from Panama and Mr Julius Shoboi Mwahunga from Kenya. The Chairperson invited the Assistant Director-General to announce the results of the vote for the election of the Members to the Committee.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** was pleased to announce the results of the vote. Number of countries voting: 155. Invalid votes: 4. Abstentions: 19. The results by Electoral Group were as follows. For Group II, two seats to be filled: Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 votes; Bulgaria, 26 votes; Estonia, 69 votes; Slovakia, 94 votes; Uzbekistan, 105 votes. **Slovakia and Uzbekistan are elected**. For Group IV, four seats to be filled: Bangladesh, 97 votes; Cambodia, 95 votes; India, 110 votes; Malaysia, 110 votes; Thailand, 75 votes; Viet Nam, 120 votes. **Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Viet Nam are elected**. Finally, for Group V(b), one seat to be filled: Iraq, 70 votes; Mauritania, 82 votes. **Mauritania is elected.**
3. The **Chairperson** congratulated to the newly elected Members of the Committee. The Assembly would have the chance to officially recognize the results through the adoption of draft resolution 11 the following day.

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED FOR THE INSCRIPTION OF ‘JOUMOU SOUP’, SUBMITTED BY HAITI, ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-8-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 8*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/8)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 8 and the endorsement of the procedure followed for the inscription of Joumou soup, submitted by Haiti, on the Representative List, inviting the Assistant Director-General to present the item.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that a request had been made by Haiti to treat the nomination ‘Joumou soup’ for inscription on the Representative List under the 2021 cycle on an exceptional accelerated basis on compassionate grounds. This followed back-to-back natural disasters that had struck the country in August 2021 in a context of broad social and political turmoil. Working document 8 outlined the steps followed to process the request. The nomination file received a complete assessment and a positive recommendation by the Evaluation Body. On that basis, the Secretariat included the matter in the provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the Committee, informing the Bureau accordingly. The Committee was advised that, under the provisions of the Convention, the Committee is vested with the authority to examine a request for inscription and decide thereupon on the basis of procedures foreseen by the Operational Directives, which are established by the General Assembly. Therefore, it followed that as the inscription took place in circumstances that were not foreseen in the Operational Directives, the Committee’s decision to inscribe required the endorsement of the General Assembly. Hence, the reason this case is brought to the attention of this present session at the behest of the Committee. While deciding to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List, the Committee invited the Open-ended working group on the listing mechanisms to examine the procedures for exceptional cases, which is part of the issue covered under agenda item 9.
3. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for comments.
4. The delegation of **Grenada** congratulated Haiti for the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List; its first inscription. There was no doubt that it would be inscribed. The procedure had been undertaken under exceptional circumstances and the Assembly would no doubt accept this exceptional procedure. The delegation had a slight amendment in paragraph 5 of the draft decision.
5. The **Chairperson** took note of the list of speakers, closing the list due to time constraints.
6. The delegation of **Barbados** congratulated Haiti on its inscription of Joumou soup, commending the Committee for understanding the circumstances that had resulted in this accelerated process and for maintaining the high level of evaluation, while diligently following the Convention’s procedures. It remarked that Haiti’s circumstances can be seen throughout CARICOM Member States[[34]](#footnote-34) because of the ever-present threat of natural disasters and their deleterious effects on their intangible cultural heritage. In the Caribbean, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage has become increasingly urgent, particularly when considering the devastating impact of the unpredictable and destructive hurricane season on these countries and their economies. Disaster risk management and resilience for SIDS, like Barbados, has become an integral part of development planning, specifically where intangible cultural heritage is concerned. These disasters have devastating consequences and leaves lasting damage, depending on the affected populations and the resilience of infrastructures. However, less visible are the threats presented to the culture sector across the region. In response, the Government of Barbados seeks to mitigate against these impacts through an extensive digitization programme. It recognizes that digitization is essential to the entire process of protecting cultural heritage and that it also has the potential to benefit several categories of users and future generations because it is a means of preserving images of the past and present. It is also the Government’s intention to address the impacts of climate change on intangible cultural heritage through global cooperation. Barbados leads the call for increases in technical and financial support to SIDS and to mitigate against these impacts. The Prime Minister of Barbados, H.E Mia Mottley, in her address to COP26, called for greater global financial commitment to address the disastrous effects of climate change, challenging nations to do more. The failure to provide the critical finance and the damage measured in lost lives and livelihoods is immoral and unjust. The time for action is now, and as the twentieth anniversary of the Convention approaches, Barbados seeks greater awareness and international support.
7. The **Chairperson** reminded delegations to limit their interventions to two minutes.
8. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** congratulated the newly elected Members to the Committee, as well as Haiti and its people on this inscription, which gives a sense of pride and encouragement to the communities of Haiti, helping to unite and make more inclusive. The delegation recalled the extensive discussions held on this topic during the last Committee meeting and why it invited the Assembly to endorse this inscription and adopt the draft resolution as a whole.
9. The delegation of **Estonia** congratulated the new Committee Members. It believed that the accelerated examination by the Committee of Joumou soup proposed by Haiti is a good example of the Committee’s flexibility, goodwill and ability to act quickly, even in unchartered territory. The delegation had no hesitation in endorsing the exceptional procedure used as great care was taken by both the Secretariat and the Committee to treat it under the same substantive conditions as any other nomination file. The Evaluation Body conducted a full assessment of the file, recommending it for inscription. It congratulated Haiti once again for this well-deserved inscription. Just a few days earlier, ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List as a case of extreme urgency in the sense of Article 17.3[[35]](#footnote-35) of the Convention. Indeed, the delegation noted that given the ongoing full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and the natural disasters and social turmoil that struck Haiti, the Assembly was reminded once again that intangible cultural heritage cannot be separated by its practitioners. Indeed, its safeguarding is indivisible from the protection of the lives and well-being of its bearers. It was interesting to note that both nominations concern the culture of soup-making. Food is shared and enjoyed together. Both Joumou soup and Ukrainian borscht cooking represent an inclusive cultural phenomenon in which all segments of society identify.
10. The delegation of **France** congratulated Haiti for the inscription of this new element on the Representative List. However, it regretted that the Operational Directives are silent on unscheduled procedures, such as the one which allowed this file to be examined. In fact, the lack of clarity in UNESCO’s statutes, regulations and procedures can sometimes be seen as a form of flexibility and an asset in general, but the delegation believed that it should be amended because it carried a non-negligible risk of preventing and blocking programmes dealing with political and cultural issues that may be the subject of tensions, as occurred with the Memory of the World until 2021, for example. This is why France wished to have the clearest defined criteria possible for the inscription of sites on the Memory of the World Register or those associated with recent conflicts within the framework of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.
11. The delegation of **Cuba** celebrated the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List as a SIDS and neighbour of Haiti, especially considering the complex context in which it was inscribed. It is a great message for reconciliation, for peoples and the development of a culture of peace, and why Cuba joined all the other voices in congratulating Haiti. The delegation had carefully followed the presentation of this file, but Haiti has some specificities that made it very special and why it required special attention. Cuba reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the mechanisms for conciliation on these issues in order to avoid situations that lead to discussion and complicated situations generated within the Committee with regard to decision-making powers. It is important that the Convention and UNESCO continue to promote culture as a means of reconciliation in conflict situations and for such countries like SIDS that suffer vital emergencies and where culture plays such an important role in social transformation and the resolution of these difficulties. The delegation congratulated Ambassador Dominique Dupuy of Haiti on the country’s first inscription on the Representative List.
12. The delegation of **Morocco** congratulated Haiti for its inscription and spoke of how it was happy that the Committee, at its last session, did not function as technicians of culture but as people imbued with values and principles, bringing everyone together, showing the beauty of this Convention. This was a message of solidarity, compassion and friendship to all Haitian people in a context of national drama. The delegation congratulated Ambassador Dominique Dupuy and all the people of Haiti.
13. The delegation of **Paraguay** congratulated the Chairperson on her excellent leadership and expressed support for the exceptional procedure that was applied at the sixteenth session of the Committee for the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. Upon a request by Haiti, the Committee examined the nomination in an accelerated manner for the 2020/2021 cycle following a series of natural disasters. This made it possible for the Evaluation Body to carry out a full examination in the context of many factors, especially the natural disasters that affected the country at a time of great social and political upheaval. The art of cooking frequently respects and follows both the history and culture of peoples, and those elements are found in the Joumou soup of Haiti. The delegation reiterated its support to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List and congratulated its brotherly nation of Haiti.
14. The delegation of **Japan** congratulated Haiti, noting that this was the first inscription for Haiti on the basis of natural disasters, which the Committee took into consideration with a very positive outcome. The delegation reminded the Assembly that, at the time, a few countries had expressed some concerns, not about the Haiti file, which they supported, but about the implications of the decision, which was subsequently discussed in the Open-ended working group. There was now an agreement on how to deal with emergency cases and the delegation would report on it under agenda item 9 [on the global reflection of the listing mechanisms]. It concluded by congratulating all the concerned parties and, particularly, the Ambassador of Haiti, Dominique Dupuy, for this inscription.
15. The delegation of **Malaysia** congratulated the new Committee Members. Malaysia expressed solidarity with Haiti and its people and recognized the relevance of accelerating the inscription of Joumou soup. It took note that the Evaluation Body had considered that the nomination satisfied all five criteria for inscription on the Representative List. The delegation agreed that the safeguarding and preservation of Joumou soup should not be delayed, with its inscription serving to enhance the visibility of the element and contributing to the national recovery from the effects of natural disasters. It congratulated Haiti for its inscription of Joumou soup.
16. The delegation of **Poland** congratulated Haiti on the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. Indeed, difficult times demand special actions. Poland was proud that this decision was taken during the Committee session in 2021 following a long discussion on how it wished to proceed during this special request by the Government of Haiti and owing to the natural hazards experienced by the country during a time of political upheaval. The delegation underlined that this decision was taken because the Committee decided to inscribe Joumou soup despite the absence of a procedure on inscribing elements on an extreme basis. In addition, there was a lot of discussion as to whether the Assembly has any competence in endorsing acts of the Committee. In this regard, it wished to see the amendment by Grenada.
17. The delegation of **Palestine** congratulated Haiti for the inscription of Joumou soup. It highlighted the remarks made by France and Japan that there is no legal text for emergency cases, as discussed during the working group. The Committee took the decision to inscribe Joumou soup as a necessary emergency. An extraordinary session had also been convened for Ukraine in a similar case. These cases were inscribed on an exceptional basis and the delegation congratulated the Committee for reaching an understanding on these elements. Nevertheless, for the future, this should serve as a lesson. The Convention needs to have a legal text for emergency cases rather than treating such cases as exceptional. The Assembly could be inspired by the 1972 Convention where there is a special emergency procedure in which a different timetable is applied. The Secretariat was asked to take note and to amend the Operational Directives in the future for such emergency procedure in these special cases.
18. The delegation of **Panama** joined in the celebration of the inscription of Joumou soup, recalling the happiness that was experienced in December 2021 in Haiti when the element was inscribed. This is a new issue and with reference to the foreword by the UNESCO Director-General in the 2020 Edition of the Basic Texts of the Convention, the delegation recalled that to account for changes in intangible heritage and living heritage there have been developments in terms of its scope and reach. The first one in terms of the dialogue that has been improved during the nomination process. The second one concerns the provision of guidance to safeguard in cases of emergency, in response to the rising number of conflicts and natural hazards worldwide. The delegation underlined the fact that the text mentions how living heritage is a powerful tool for resilience and recovery. This was one of the central themes discussed [during the Committee session] in 2021. Haiti’s nomination goes beyond regulations and directives to reveal what people have been through in the recovery of conflicts, the death of the president at the time, and the natural disasters that struck the country. States Parties should therefore congratulate themselves in responding to a request from a Member State. The delegation supported the draft decision as a whole and supported the endorsement that is required from this Assembly.
19. The delegation of **Uruguay** congratulated the newly elected Members to the Committee. In 1878, Uruguay participated in Paris at a universal exhibition with Haiti in a demonstration of its closeness with the people of Haiti and why it was delighted that Joumou soup was inscribed. The delegation understood that this was a show of flexibility based on the principles of the Convention in the service of living heritage and humanity at large. It is a great moment for the Convention. It also understood that the Assembly is in an unusual situation, as Barbados rightly said, in that this situation could happen to us all and a reflection on these issues was thus necessary. As Cuba rightly said, culture has transformative and healing power. This has been repeated many times and it can be celebrated. Culture is an exercise of identity, and gastronomy is a foundational stone of cultural identity. The Convention is richer thanks to the addition of the Haiti element, and the delegation applauded and celebrated this inscription.
20. The delegation of **Djibouti** reiterated its position expressed at the Committee meeting in its full support for the deserved inscription Joumou soup by Haiti, congratulating the country since the Evaluation Body’s recommendation in which all five criteria had been met. As human beings gathered here with principles and values, and in view of the situation that prevailed at the time, States Parties had demonstrated their solidarity and compassion with the Haitian people. The delegation congratulated the Ambassador of Haiti for her great work on a day of celebration that showed unity in diversity. It congratulated the elected Committee Members. Having served on the Committee for the past four years and as Vice-Chair of Group V(a) for two years, Djibouti thanked all the supporters and, in particular, those of Group V(a) for their trust over two terms, wishing the newcomers good luck. The Committee had shown its solidarity and that UNESCO is not about words but deeds.
21. The delegation of **Colombia** congratulated Haiti on its inscription and also for the show of flexibility by the Committee and its ability to learn from unusual situations as it finetuned its procedures over the past months. It congratulated the show of solidarity and friendship demonstrated by this inscription. The delegation had already presented its technical comments and therefore fully endorsed and congratulated all the new Members of the Committee, wishing them well for the future.
22. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** joined its voice to the other members of GRULAC as well as the other regional groups to congratulate Haiti on the inscription of Joumou soup. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has a longstanding relationship and friendship with Haiti, which predates the Haitian Revolution, and it was delighted with its first inscription. It looked forward to more elements given Haiti’s cultural wealth, which it can share with the world. The delegation also supported the remarks regarding this learning experience, as well as the discussions on how to deal with these types of situations, for which it will be necessary to establish a framework that will enable the Convention to respond to these events. It also congratulated the newly elected Members of the Committee, expressing its interest in providing support in the coming sessions.
23. The delegation of **Argentina** congratulated the newly elected Members of the Committee and the brothers of Haiti to celebrate the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. It shared the sentiment that was beautifully expressed by Uruguay. The delegation hoped the Assembly would endorse the Committee’s recommendations. It supported the draft decision.
24. The delegation of **Ethiopia** joined the many delegations to congratulate Haiti, its people and Ambassador Dominique Dupuy for the inscription of Joumou soup. It is truly deserved. Haiti has a special place among the people in Ethiopia and Africa who consider it to be part and parcel of the continent although it is in the GRULAC region. Our hearts are with the people of Haiti in these trying times and the fact that UNESCO aligned with its Constitution showed true moral solidarity with the people of Haiti by inscribing Joumou soup on an accelerated basis. It is confirmation that UNESCO can indeed play a positive role in helping uplift people who are living in exceptional circumstances and who are undergoing hardships both humanmade and natural. The fact that the Committee lived up to its responsibility means it has lifted us up as well. The delegation thus fully endorsed the draft decision presented and would not accept any amendments that would water down this resolution. It looked forward to a similar spirit that will animate the incoming Committee Members, of which Ethiopia is a Member, in order to ensure relevance to people who suffer throughout the world and not just in one part.
25. The delegation of **Kenya** congratulated Haiti for its inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. This is a great milestone for Haiti, demonstrating its resilience following a series of natural disasters that struck the country in August 2021. Kenya also congratulated the Committee for having examined the element on an accelerated basis and proposing its inscription. Joumou soup is a symbol of Haiti’s freedom after independence, providing a sign of hope and encouragement to the people of Haiti as they fought to recover from exceptionally challenging circumstances. This inscription confirmed the flexibility of the Committee in making critical decisions regarding the examination of the elements. The people of Haiti can now enjoy this great inscription that gives them a sense of identity and continuity. Situations like the one that befell Haiti is not exceptional, as all countries can potentially experience such vulnerability. It is thus only fair that such situations confronting any other country can invoke assistance in protecting intangible cultural heritage through the inscription of nominated elements within the framework of the Convention. This will motivate stakeholders of intangible cultural heritage to continue practising and enacting their cultures. The procedure for evaluating and examining nominations and, in particular, its timetable is laid out in the Operational Directives. The Committee therefore examined a request and made its decision based on procedures foreseen in the Operational Directives. Kenya therefore appreciated the exceptional circumstances experienced by Haiti that necessitated the examination of the nomination on a fast-track basis. Nevertheless, its decision to inscribe requires the endorsement of the General Assembly. Kenya further welcomed the decision by the Evaluation Body to examine the element under the same conditions applied to assess the nomination files in the 2020/2021 cycle. It also appreciated the work of the Open-ended working group on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms for discussing this matter. Considering Haiti’s special circumstances, it was hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the inscription of Joumou soup.
26. The delegation ofthe **Cook Islands** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and welcomed the new Committee Members, adding that intangible cultural heritage is very important to the Cook Islands. The delegation congratulated Haiti and its Ambassador on the inscription of Joumou soup as its first element. Joumou soup has tremendous importance to the people of Haiti. It is not just a soup but a symbol of reconciliation in a country that has endured many traumas. As mentioned by Barbados, SIDS are highly vulnerable and when it is possible to celebrate an event, such as this inscription, SIDS like to join the party. It was noted that only 11 SIDS had been able to present elements and only 9% of the 631 elements [inscribed on the Lists] come from SIDS. Congratulations were again expressed to Haiti and, undoubtedly, there will be more elements by more SIDS in the near future. Hopefully, this can be achieved with the assistance of the new Committee Members, the development of capacity-building, and through the simplification of the process. It is an urgent matter and the delegation joined the call for rules governing emergency cases, not least because climate change is affecting more and more SIDS. Tuvalu declared a state of emergency on 20 March 2020. Rising sea levels is a reality in the Pacific region, which could lead to forced migration of some or all the population to foreign countries. Although these nations will do their utmost to bring with them their intangible heritage, without adequate protection they could be lost forever.
27. The delegation of **Slovakia** congratulated Haiti for the inscription of Joumou soup, which positively reflected on the very prompt reaction of the Committee to the situation that resulted in its inscription on an accelerated procedure during an emergency situation. It was a useful tool for safeguarding this element for the people of Haiti, but it was also an important expression of solidarity. The delegation supported the development of special emergency procedures for future such occurrences around the world.
28. The delegation of **Chile** congratulated the newly elected Members of the Committee and expressed support for the procedure followed by the Committee for the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List presented by Haiti. It was delighted to hear the massive support voiced in this Assembly for the decision taken by the Committee. The delegation believed in showing solidarity, flexibility and understanding for the situation of countries that suffer the most. It agreed with the importance of strengthening procedures to ensure that this type of important decision can be applied to all nations in the future.
29. The delegation of **Brazil** welcomed the new Committee Members and thanked the Secretariat for this presentation. Brazil was among the countries that supported the procedure to adopt the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. It was very glad that although there were concerns at the time, concerning the adoption of exceptional procedures for this inscription, the Committee had come to a consensual decision, thereby fulfilling UNESCO’s role, not only in safeguarding intangible heritage but in making use of culture as a source of hope and resilience for distressed communities facing a severe humanitarian crisis. In taking this important decision, the Committee could not and did not overstep the mandate created by the Convention nor did it deviate from its role laid out by the General Assembly in the Operational Directives. The entire evaluation procedure was strictly followed under the same conditions, criteria and methodology used for any other file. The exceptional recourse to the accelerated schedule was widely debated in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs to make sure that the decision was taken in full legality within the prerogative of the Committee and in light of the flexibility provided by the text of the Convention and its Operational Directives. Thus, as a Member of the Committee, having taken part in the decision, Brazil asked the Assembly to endorse the Committee’s decision and to reaffirm its message of hope and solidarity to the Haitian people.
30. The delegation of **Botswana** congratulated the new Members of the Committee, thanking all the outgoing Members. It congratulated the Ambassador of Haiti, the Government of Haiti and its people for this inscription. The delegation supported the draft resolution.
31. The delegation of **Cyprus** congratulated Haiti for its inscription, adding that it approved the inscriptions of extreme urgency. Moreover, procedures for this type of exceptional inscription must be established.
32. The delegation of **Viet Nam** congratulated Haiti and its people for the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. It shared the views of the many previous speakers. Given the challenging situation that the people of Haiti faced, this soup is a symbol of reconciliation, resilience and values of culture. The inscription truly reflected the friendship and solidarity and beauty of this Convention. Viet Nam reiterated its support and fully endorsed the draft decision, congratulating Haiti and its Ambassador for its well-deserved first element.
33. The **Chairperson** remarked that the procedure used had been clearly explained, together with the pertinent considerations as to the role of the Committee and the General Assembly in this case. She then turned to the adoption of the draft decision on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. There were no comments of objections to paragraphs 1–4 and they were duly adopted. Paragraph 5 contained a proposed amendment by Grenada, which replaced ‘Endorses’ with ‘Further takes note of the procedure […]’ at the beginning of the paragraph.
34. The delegation of **Grenada** fully supported the inscription of Joumou soup and commended the Committee for having responded to the request of Haiti for an accelerated procedure to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List. It explained that it did not wish to water down the decision but, on the contrary, to improve it. There is massive support for inscription and it endorsed the Committee’s decision. However, by endorsing the procedure itself, the Assembly was in contradiction because it was validating a listing procedure. The Open-ended working group had discussed this procedure in the framework of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and was to present a recommendation for an accelerated process under agenda item 9, as expressed in paragraph 1190 of the Summary records of the working group in Document [LHE/22/5.EXT.COM/INF.4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-5.EXT.COM-INF.4-EN.docx). Thus, if the Assembly now endorsed the procedure it would be in contradiction with the recommendation by the working group under consideration. Hence its proposal to ‘Further takes notes of’.
35. The delegation of **Ethiopia** respectfully disagreed with Grenada’s amendment. This is a matter of substance and whether or not the Assembly endorsed the accelerated schedule, endorsed the compassionate grounds and endorsed the exceptional nature of the procedure, which was followed in view of the suffering of Haiti’s people. It was a political matter, not mere technicality. The delegation did not accept ‘take note’, proposing instead to ‘fully’ endorse the procedure.
36. The delegation of **Japan** congratulated the new Members of the Committee. It recalled the extensive discussions in the Committee at the time because there was not a clear procedure for this action. In the end it was agreed to bring the decision to the General Assembly. The delegation believed that changing the word from ‘endorses’ to ‘takes note’ would mean that the Assembly could not inscribe Haiti’s file. The understanding was the Committee had agreed that the General Assembly had to approve it. The delegation sought clarification from the Legal Adviser, adding that it fully agreed with Ethiopia that the decision had to be endorsed fully.
37. The **Chairperson** would seek legal counsel after the interventions.
38. The delegation of **Colombia** believed that Grenada’s proposal, which had been explained to the working group, only aimed to say that this was an extraordinary procedure. Although inscription was supported by all, it was setting a precedent that required clarification in the event of future cases being brought to the Committee. The delegation also wished to hear the opinion of the Legal Adviser to see how this would be recognized as a legitimate case, which is fully approved by the Assembly. As previously stated, the delegation would not wish this fast track to be used again. It preferred to use Article 17.3, the procedure of which may indeed require some clarification, as rightfully mentioned by Palestine, Cyprus and others.
39. The delegation of **Palestine** believed that there was a misunderstanding. The inscription of Joumou soup was not opposed by any States Parties, with everyone expressing their congratulations to Haiti, including Grenada. It did not agree with Ethiopia in that the Assembly cannot, for legal reasons, fully endorse this procedure without having references to it in the Operational Directives. The delegation suggested a compromise between ‘endorses’ and ‘takes note’, for example, ‘further takes note with satisfaction’, which would the best way to respect the future work of the Assembly and the [ongoing] working groups. This would ensure that this question is legally addressed so as to reflect such procedures in the legal text of the Convention and, especially, in the Operational Directives.
40. The delegation of **Djibouti** recalled that it was present in the room when defending this element and that the Assembly should not now start to alter words that have important meaning, especially at this late hour. It supported the proposal made by Ethiopia to leave the text unchanged, if not to improve the text by adding that it ‘fully’ endorsed the inscription of Joumou soup. The delegation spoke of the whole country watching the deliberations and that the Assembly should be united and not open a Pandora’s box. The delegation appealed to the delegations to accept the original text as presented.
41. The **Chairperson** invited the Legal Adviser to respond to the points raised.
42. The **Legal Adviser** believed that ultimately there was one question posed but in several iterations and he recalled the overwhelming consensus in the Committee in December 2021 to two things. The first was to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List and, second, to not let the governing bodies of this Convention stop the procedure, despite not specifically being providing for, at least, in this specific instance. Indeed, his legal advice had already been sought by the Committee (at its sixteenth session) on this nomination file. The Legal Adviser recalled the main points of that legal advice, as they respond to the questions posed by Japan and Colombia. As explained then, the Operational Directives contain a precise timetable for the evaluation and examination of nominations, which does not foresee the examination of a nomination on an accelerated basis, as mentioned on several occasions. Given the silence, reference is made to the Convention, which establishes an institutional mechanism of checks and balances by which, pursuant to Article 7(g), the Committee is vested with the authority to examine requests for inscription and to decide on those requests. However, at the same time, Article 7(e) says that it must do so following procedures foreseen in the Operational Directives, which are prepared by the Committee but approved by this Assembly. The Legal Adviser therefore explained at the time that should the Committee consider that exceptional circumstances warrant the accelerated examination of this nomination, it could consider the possibility of doing so and, if it were to find that the conditions were fulfilled, it could inscribe the element on the Representative List, which is what took place.
43. The **Legal Adviser** also pointed out at the time that, given that the inscription would then have taken place in circumstances not foreseen by the Operational Directives and under a procedure not foreseen by the Operational Directives, the procedure followed for the inscription (not the inscription itself), would require the endorsement of the General Assembly. It is on this basis that the Committee took its decision. The Legal Adviser surmised that this discussion arises from a possible ambiguity in paragraph 5 [of the draft resolution]. What the Assembly would decide to endorse is the *procedure* that what was followed in this specific instance, which – as the Committee has pointed out – was exceptional, as noted in paragraph 7 of Decision[16.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/19) (which decided the inscription), followed by paragraph 8 (which notes that this inscription occurred on an exceptional basis with respect to procedures). This is without prejudice to the further work under the proposals deriving from the working group that the Assembly may decide to undertake with respect to the Operational Directives. Thus, the Legal Adviser suggested to actually emphasize that point, for example, by saying ‘endorses the procedure followed on an exceptional basis for the inscription of Joumou soup’, which might satisfy the concerns of both sides.
44. The delegation of **Poland** is a Member of the Committee that was very much in favour of the inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List. It wished to ask the Legal Adviser, and it was raised at that time as well, *what is the legal basis of the endorsement of the General Assembly of any decision of the Committee?* The delegation also sought clarification from the Legal Adviser on another point. Paragraph 7 of Decision 16.COM 19 decides to inscribe Joumou soup on the Representative List, yet some delegations in this session consider that the element is not inscribed. The delegation was of the understanding that the Committee had taken a solid decision and already inscribed the element on the Representative List.
45. The delegation of **Cameroon** had participated as a Member of the Committee in the adoption or validation of the inscription of Joumou soup on the basis of the exceptional situation which had been presented. Moreover, the factors that led to this request were clear and it had been decided in a consensual manner with regard to the values ​​of fraternity and solidarity, and to support Haiti’s request. Today, within the framework of this Assembly, Cameroon reiterated its full support of this decision. The delegation conceded that there was certainly a nuanced understanding between a procedure and a substantive decision. However, if a legal text does not provide for a procedure but potentially authorizes the Committee to adopt such a decision on an exceptional basis to respond to an urgent situation, it also recognizes the authority of the Committee, even though this decision requires the approbation of the General Assembly. As for the inscription mechanisms under review, the delegation believed that amendments, even if new procedures are proposed, should not be applied retroactively but to situations in the future. The delegation fully supported Haiti’s inscription.
46. The delegation of **Grenada** reiterated, as mentioned by the Legal Adviser, that the issue concerned the procedure, not the inscription, which is not in question. The soup has been inscribed and all the delegations that had spoken had congratulated Haiti and commended the Committee for having found an accelerated solution to the special request. It was surprised to hear the political connotation. The delegation would have accepted, ‘further takes note with satisfaction’ or the proposal by the Legal Adviser, ‘endorses the procedure on an exceptional basis’, but this was not the place to question the inscription. The delegation reiterated its congratulations to the Ambassador of Haiti for having prepared the file so well in the short time period. There were certainly lessons to be learnt but it was hoped that the working group would propose a new accelerated procedure that all delegations would accept by consensus. As a solution, the delegation withdrew its amendment.
47. The **Chairperson** noted a point of order requested by Uruguay.
48. The delegation of **Uruguay** had wished to take the floor before Grenada that now withdrew its amendment. It believed that a consensus could be obtained for the proposal made by the Legal Advisor concerning the procedure rather than the inscription, which is indispensable and which all delegations had agreed. Uruguay thus endorsed the proposal by the Legal Adviser.
49. The **Chairperson** noted the latest amendment, which would now read, ‘Endorses the procedure followed for the inscription of Joumou soup on an exceptional basis as part of the 2021 cycle on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity’.
50. The delegation of **Palestine** could go along with the proposal but suggested placing ‘on an exceptional basis’ after ‘endorses’, as it is the procedure that is endorsed on an exceptional basis.
51. The **Legal Adviser** agreed that the placement of ‘on an exceptional basis’ changes the meaning of the sentence. In this case, the current new wording implied that the Assembly was ‘endorsing on an exceptional basis’, i.e. there is insistence on the fact that what is exceptional is the endorsement by the General Assembly. If on the contrary, the Assembly agreed on the original wording, it would emphasize what appears in paragraph 8 of the Committee’s Decision 16.COM 19, i.e. that the *procedure* for the inscription was applied on an exceptional basis. The placement as it is currently stood implied that the Assembly endorses a procedure that was applied on an exceptional basis.
52. The delegation of **Palestine** believed that it was the Assembly’s duty to say whether it endorses on an exceptional basis or not. The delegation understood that the Committee had already followed this procedure on an exceptional basis, as mentioned. The Assembly now also endorses the procedure but on an exceptional basis because the wish is to have such procedures reflected in the Operational Directives [in the future]. There should be a clear mechanism so that exceptions do not occur all the time. The delegation could go along with the amendment, ‘Endorses, on an exceptional basis, the procedure’.
53. The delegation of **Uruguay** remarked that in order to achieve consensus everybody has to move closer. Uruguay had no difficulty in accepting the proposal by Palestine, adding that ‘an exceptional basis’ could be cited twice if it would help move forward and close the door on any exceptional situation in the future that would be provided with a specific framework.
54. The delegation of **Peru** believed that all States Parties want to celebrate and congratulate Haiti for this inscription. Thus, any amendment that raised doubts as to the legality of the process and procedures followed by the Committee, of which Peru was a Member, would undermine the decision that had been firmly taken by the Committee, as rightly mentioned by Poland. The amendment by Palestine did not help create an atmosphere of celebration and it did not agree to move ‘on an exceptional basis’ after ‘Endorses’. In order to find a consensus, it agreed to the suggestion by the Legal Adviser, where it appears after ‘Joumou soup’.
55. The delegation of **Ethiopia** had difficulty in understanding Palestine pushing this issue to such an extent, adding that the idea of accelerated schedule, compassionate grounds and exceptional basis should be something endorsed by all, especially by States that face difficulties. But for the purpose of compromise, it could accept Palestine’s amendment, after ‘endorses’, which remains.
56. The delegation of **Djibouti** remarked that the Legal Adviser had made a proposal, seconded by Peru. It did not wish to spend more time on technicalities and lose sight of the inscription. The delegation noted the broad consensus on the text, requesting the Chairperson to close the debate on this point.
57. The **Chairperson** asked the General Assembly whether the text as shown on the screen was acceptable. Kuwait called a point of order.
58. The delegation of **Kuwait** recalled that the placement of ‘on an exceptional basis’ had been discussed in the Committee with the intention to give the General Assembly the opportunity to ‘endorse’. The delegation considered the amendment by Palestine to be a middle-ground, i.e. to have ‘on an exceptional basis’ placed after ‘endorses’. Indeed, no delegation had questioned the inscription, which had satisfied the five criteria, and the issue therefore concerned the procedure. The reason the phrase should be placed at the beginning was due to the fact that there is no reference [in the texts] to the procedure. Kuwait therefore suggested to close the debate, endorse the inscription and have the phrase after ‘Endorse’ so as to move forward.
59. The delegation of **Cyprus** preferred the proposal put forward by the Legal Adviser, but for the sake of consensus could consider having ‘on an exceptional basis’ mentioned twice.
60. The delegationof **Palestine** could agree.
61. The delegation of **Ethiopia** remarked that it had accepted to place ‘on an exceptional basis’ after ‘Endorses’ but it would not accept the phrase twice in the same sentence.
62. The delegation of **Djibouti** asked why the draft resolution, as it appeared on the screen, could not simply be adopted, which would be the easiest option, agreeing with Kuwait on the need to agree on the text and move forward. Moreover, the proposed change was minor and the Legal Adviser had already provided his counsel as well as an acceptable text, which the Assembly was ready to adopt.
63. The delegation of **Palestine** called a point of order, adding that it had made a proposal that had been supported by others, including those who had initially opposed it and thanking Ethiopia for its flexibility. In addition, there were many delegations that supported the phrase both after ‘Endorses’ and after ‘Joumou soup’. The delegation was not opposed to this solution.
64. The delegation of **Ethiopia** did not agree to having two ‘on an exceptional basis’, asking to delete the second.
65. The delegation of **Japan** asked that the Chairperson make a proposal, to which the Assembly would likely agree.
66. The **Chairperson** noted a growing consensus such that it would not be difficult to find a common language. It was a matter of flexibility with ‘exceptional basis’ mentioned twice so as to finalize the decision.
67. The delegation of **Ethiopia** explained that it had agreed to move closer towards Palestine’s amendment, i.e. to place ‘exceptional basis’ after ‘Endorses’, even though it was not in favour of it, it would accept it in the spirit of consensus. But it would not accept to have two mentions of ‘exceptional basis’, which was the consensus.
68. The **Assistant Director-General** commended the interpreters for their work [applause]. He noted three different proposals, for which there was no unanimous position. Even though the delegations agreed with the content of paragraph 5, the issue remained the placement of ‘an exceptional basis’. One option placed it after ‘Endorse’, the second option placed it after ‘Joumou soup’, and the third option placed the phrase in both positions.
69. The delegation of **Panama** spoke of the unfortunate situation for the Haitian people, adding that this was more important than simply playing with words. The Legal Adviser had advised the Assembly on the correct legal position, which Panama supported. The delegation recalled the Assembly’s enthusiasm for the inscription of Joumou soup, on which everyone agreed. It was not convinced of any option other than the one recommended to the Assembly by the Legal Adviser. This should not be a matter of pedanticism and the Assembly should opt for the right thing to do, which is why is the proposal put forward by the Legal Adviser.
70. The delegation of **Madagascar** returned to the explanation of the Legal Adviser, who said that the most important thing is to approve the procedure, i.e. endorses the procedure for the inscription of Joumou soup and this on an exceptional basis. In this regard, the first formulation respected both the content and the form.
71. The delegation of **Lebanon** was surprised by the reactions in the room. The Legal Adviser had provided his counsel and some States Parties had made an effort towards consensus by approving ‘on an exceptional basis’. As a point of order, indeed, on several occasions, States Parties had requested that the second ‘on an exceptional basis’ be deleted, which had not been respected. If it had been done, the Chairperson could have asked whether any States Parties had objected, with the likelihood that it would have been adopted.
72. The delegation of **Haiti** believed that there was indeed a point of order because there was a proposal made, which had received support from the Assembly, despite certain reservations. In the spirit of consensus, as expressed by Ethiopia, the delegation could agree with the proposal made by Palestine. The delegation appealed to the Assembly to support Palestine’s proposal so as to conclude the decision and move forward.
73. The **Chairperson** read out the amended paragraph 5, which reads, ‘Endorses, on an exceptional basis, the procedure followed for the inscription of Joumou soup as part of the 2021 cycle on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity’. With no objections, the paragraph was adopted. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 8 adopted.**
74. The delegation of **Haiti** expressed sincere congratulations to the new elected Members of the Committee. It recalled that exactly one year ago, on 7 July 2021, the population awoke to the chilling and shocking news that the sitting President, Jovenel Moïse, was assassinated in his residence by foreign mercenaries. This led to unprecedented mourning in every corner of Haiti, adding to the sentiment of incredulity and panic to the many challenges already facing Haitians. The American continent had not felt such a magnitude of suffering for more than a century. The assassination ignited a complicated political situation when one month later, on 14 August, a major earthquake shook the country and devasted its southern peninsula, ravaging everything in its path and sparing no school, hospital, church or human life. Two days later, hurricane Grace swept the same peninsula, resulting in a grave humanitarian crisis with close to 600,000 people displaced adding to this collective trauma. Only dignity can help men and women rise from such harrowing events and challenges. This same dignity, this unwavering conviction that life goes on, experienced by every Haitian, and which inspired the first successful revolution against enslavement. This enabled the victory of the army against the oppressive colonial regime and its system of slavery. From this dignity was born, in Haiti, the first Black Republic in the history of humanity. Today, the grain of hope exists in UNESCO. The delegation of Haiti submitted in March 2021 its first nomination file of an element of intangible cultural heritage for inscription to the Representative List. The 23 August 2021, due to the numerous tragedies that befell the country, Haiti was granted an accelerated evaluation of its file so that the element Joumou soup could be inscribed in the current cycle.
75. It was thus with honour and emotion that the delegation of **Haiti** thanked the Secretariat for having treated this request, the Evaluation Body for determining that the file fulfilled its five criteria, and the Committee for approving its inscription at its sixteenth session in December 2021. The delegation also thanked the Open-ended working group for having worked on the question of the listing mechanisms and, lastly, the members of the Assembly for their kind words of support and patience in acknowledging this historic moment. The delegation invited the delegations to share Joumou soup, which incarnates the pioneering spirit that permeates the DNA of Haiti. Its preparation represents a ritual that has remained uninterrupted since 1 January 1804 to the present day. Its consumption and sharing among people is an ultimate expression of faith in a better tomorrow – even in the country’s darkest moments. The inscription of Joumou soup is an ode to liberty and dignity, soothing the soul, and a remedy to help the country rise again and reignite the vision of its founders, as well as defend and inspire all those who are oppressed, voiceless and invisible in this world.
76. Congratulating Haiti, the delegation of **Germany** invited the delegations to celebrate the new members of the Committee with a glass of beer and pretzels.
77. The **Chairperson** adjourned the day’s session.

*[Thursday, 7 July, morning session]*

**ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA:**

**THE GLOBAL REFLECTION ON THE LISTING MECHANISMS OF THE CONVENTION AND PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

**Documents:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/9.Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-9_Rev._EN.docx)

[*LHE/21/16.COM/INF.14*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM-INF.14-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/5.EXT.COM/INF.4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-5.EXT.COM-INF.4-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 9*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9)

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations to the third and last day of the General Assembly. The Bureau met again that morning to revise the provisional timetable, with eight items left to examine. The morning session would cover the following four items: item 9 on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention and proposed revisions to the Operational Directives; item 10 on the use of resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund; part 2 of item 11 on the election of the Members of the Committee; and item 12 on the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. In the afternoon, suspended item 7 would be re-opened with expectations that the discussion of the informal consultation group will help conclude paragraph 7 bis and adopt the resolution. Work would continue on item 13 on the celebration of the Convention’s twentieth anniversary, as well as item 14, other business, followed by the closing session. The provisional timetable was published online with the proposed changes. Given the time constraints, the Chairperson asked to undertake the work in a smooth and swift manner, not least because several of the items were crucial for the ongoing functioning of the governing bodies of the Convention. A designated email address was set up to receive proposed amendments. The Chairperson turned to item 9, the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention and proposed revisions to the Operational Directives, inviting the Chairperson of the Open-ended working group, Ambassador of Japan to UNESCO, Mr Atsuyuki Oike, to present his report.
2. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group**, Mr Atsuyuki Oike, recalled that the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention was a long and inclusive process that started in 2018, involving expert surveys and consultations, as well as intergovernmental discussions. Mr Oike was entrusted with the role of spearheading the reflection as Chairperson of the working group. He expressed his honour and gratitude to all the stakeholders involved, including the experts who had participated in the earlier consultations, as well as the States Parties. Their dedication and insightful discussions had led to the significant results. The same Bureau sat for all three parts of the meeting. Mr Oike thanked the five Vice-Chairs from Côte d’Ivoire, Germany, Kuwait, Poland and Peru for their great help. Summarizing the steps of the process, Mr Oike recalled that the expert consultation (a combination of a survey and an online Category VI meeting) in the period March-May 2021 had laid the ground for the work of the working group. The experts initially proposed four main approaches for the reform of the listing mechanisms. The four suggestions were: a) stricter control, b) fine-tuning, c) repositioning and d) maximum inclusivity. In the end, experts chose two of those approaches to present to the working group, namely, b) fine-tuning and c) repositioning. Interestingly, consultations showed that experts were equally split in their recommendations of these two broad approaches. Given the extensive nature of the recommendations, gained by the expert meeting and their potentially far-reaching implications, the meeting of the Open-ended working group was convened in two parts: the first in early July 2021 (Part I), and an additional meeting in early September 2021 (Part II). Parts I and II successfully addressed the priority topics of the reflection as previously requested by the Committee, [which included the criteria, specifically R.2[[36]](#footnote-36), specific procedures for removing or transferring elements from and between Lists, and the extension of multinational nominations].
3. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group** reported that the working group’s recommendation on the first topic on criteria was to maintain all the criteria for the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List. There was considerable discussion on R.2, but instead of deleting R.2, the working group decided to alter its content. The criterion P.9[[37]](#footnote-37) of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices is to be deleted and the nomination form for each criterion will be simplified. The second major topic concerned establishing a specific procedure for removing or transferring elements from and between Lists. It was important to note that under the new system, communities may directly express their wish to transfer an element, although the *process* of transfer must be initiated by the States Parties concerned. This is an element of compromise between the two different schools of thought. The transfer from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List will follow the normal cycle, and this procedure is now linked to periodic reporting. As for the procedure of removing an element, the reformed system foresees a six-step procedure that distinguishes removal requests submitted by the States Parties concerned or by other entities. The other entities can actually propose to remove an element from the List, but the procedure is nonetheless slightly more cautious in that case. The new system also includes the idea of enhanced follow-up if the Committee considers that additional information is needed. Considerable time was spent on both Part I and Part II to produce those procedures for transfer and removal.
4. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group** then reported on the question of establishing a procedure for the extension of multinational files. The working group distinguished the procedure for an extension at international and national levels. The main difference is that the procedure is somewhat lighter for an extension within a State in terms of required criteria. For both types of extensions, the State Party is asked to demonstrate consent for the extension granted by the original communities. The working group also identified practices to be encouraged and used in the context of statutory operations under the Convention. Notably, the use of the communities’ language (or the languages that are accessible to them) in the preparation and submission of nominations and, secondly, the use of audiovisual tools, where possible, for providing information requested in the form as well as for communicating concerns. Another aspect is the use of gender neutral and inclusive language within all aspects of the Convention. Mr Oike recalled the use of the ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ in the past, but this is no longer appropriate in this context. Upon the request of the working group, the Secretariat prepared a set of draft amendments to the Operational Directives based on the recommendations emanating from Part I and Part II meetings. These proposed amendments were endorsed by the sixteenth session of the Committee in December 2021, which recommended that the General Assembly revise the Operational Directives on the basis of and reflecting on the spirit of the recommendations of the working group. Based on this request, the Committee extended the mandate of the working group to take on additional issues identified by the working group and the Committee itself. As a result, a Part III meeting was convened in April 2022. During this meeting, the working group was asked to reflect on nine discussion topics grouped into two main categories. The first category concerned five discussion topics that were ultimately linked to the annual number of files for examination. This included, most importantly, the composition and working methods of the Evaluation Body. The working group agreed to set the annual number of files to be examined at no less than 60. At the same time, it was strongly voiced that more files should be examined, so the working group requested the Secretariat to prepare a detailed proposal of the financial and human resources needed for strengthening the listing mechanism. This proposal should be submitted for examination by the Committee for transmission to the Executive Board at the tenth session of the General Assembly [in 2024]. Following this agreement, the working group agreed to maintain the current composition and working methods of the Evaluation Body.
5. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group** recalled that the working group also agreed that inscription on an extended or reduced basis are to be considered outside the annual ceiling on an experimental basis, i.e. a State Party wishing to reduce or expand its file would not be counted as one of the 60 permitted files. Some concerns were expressed in this regard as States Parties may opt for extensions (because this would not count). Thus, this measure may have to be re-examined in the future If that proves to be the case and because of its experimental nature. The second category of issues comprised other technical issues that required further reflection. Concerning the backlog files, the working group agreed that backlog files older than four years should be removed from the backlog, while inviting States Parties to submit updated versions which are to be treated expeditiously within the framework of the prioritization system. Concerning the possibility of obtaining additional information on nominations using the dialogue process with accredited NGOs, it was agreed that this issue would be discussed in the new initiative on the broader implications of Article 18 of the Convention. Concerning the examination of exceptional cases, it was decided that any exceptional cases that increased the annual ceiling shall be reviewed by the Committee, with the understanding that this does not apply to cases falling under extreme urgency. The working group invited the Secretariat to recommend possible criteria to define ‘exceptional’ cases. All the required amendments of the Operational Directives, as a result of the recommendations of the working group, were approved by the Committee at its sixteenth session and the 5th extraordinary session [of the Committee]. The present session of the General Assembly was now requested to approve the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives in order to implement the recommendations made by the Open-ended working group.
6. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group** further reported that during the Part III meeting, some members wished to include three issues in the report to the General Assembly. One issue concerned the backlog files, the other related to the working group on Article 18, and the third point related to the procedure to examine exceptional cases. On backlog files, linked to the annual number of files, files that could not be treated (due to the annual ceiling under the priority system) are commonly called backlog files and stay in the pipeline of nominations. Long discussions were held on this issue and the working group recommended that backlog files, older than four years, should be returned to the submitting State(s). Some delegations expressed concern that a few countries with a significant number of backlog files would not be able to withdraw their files, submit them again and have them evaluated within four years. In such cases, these States Parties would be required to update their files a second time. It was therefore suggested that the Secretariat open a dialogue with those States to establish a plan for the resubmission of their backlog files. On the working group on Article 18, some delegations felt that NGOs should concentrate on capacity-building and good practices rather than play a role in providing additional information on nominations. The working group on the global reflection did not have a mandate to determine an agenda item for this new working group on Article 18 of the Convention so Mr Oike was requested to mention those points in his report. On the procedure to examine exceptional cases, some delegations expressed their wish that discussions take place to identify a group or body that could work on establishing the criteria for the definition of exceptional cases in the context of the Convention. The working group could not agree on this point and therefore it was not included in the recommendations. This concluded the main points of the report.
7. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group** explained that following the request of the working group, the Secretariat had prepared a set of draft amendments to the Operational Directives based on the recommendations from the Part III meeting. He reminded the Assembly that these revisions had already been endorsed by the Committee at its sixteenth session and its 5th extraordinary session, covering all three Parts of the recommendations of the working group. As Chairperson of the working group, Mr Oike suggested that the General Assembly approve the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives without re-opening any technical discussion because, once again, all those details had been cleared at the Committee level. Mr Oike wished to clarify that the working group on the global reflection was created by the Committee. The recommendations were thus presented to the Committee for it to look at the changes in the Operational Directives as a result. The Committee then approved and endorsed those recommendations as well as the [proposed] changes to the Operational Directives. As the working group was open-ended, all parties were able to participate, with the recommendations approved institutionally, and they could therefore be considered complete. However, the General Assembly has to approve the changes to the Operational Directives and hence this agenda item. For this reason, Mr Oike appealed to the Assembly not to re-open the recommendations. He recognized that some points were relevant to the discussions held the previous day, for example, on exceptional cases, and which resulted in recommendations, but those recommendations did not require any changes in the Operational Directives. The Secretariat will come up with the proposed criteria for emergency cases at a later date; there was no time to re-open the discussions presently. Mr Oike hoped the recommendations will serve the purposes of the Convention in the future.
8. The **Chairperson** thanked Ambassador Oike for the report on the global reflection that was indeed a comprehensive process with broad consultations. The main outcome was the set of amendments to the Operational Directives as a result of the insightful recommendations of the working group. She invited the Assistant Director-General to present the amendments.
9. The **Assistant Director-General** presented the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives, as shown in working document 9. The text highlighted in grey corresponded to the recommended revisions that came from the sixteenth session of the Committee based on the recommendations of the working group’s Part I and Part II meetings. The texts highlighted in blue related to revisions recommended by the 5th extraordinary session of the Committee based on the recommendations of the working group’s Part III meeting. As mentioned by H.E. Mr Oike, the Committee (on two occasions) recommended that the present General Assembly adopt the proposed amendments on the basis that they reflect the spirit of the recommendations of the working group. In addition to the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives, some of the results of the global reflection will actually be implemented in other ways. The working group paid careful attention to the staffing requirements of the Secretariat and they also discussed how to enhance it. At the request of the working group, the Secretariat planned to submit a proposal on the financial and human resources of the Secretariat for examination by the eighteenth session of the Committee in 2023 with a view to subsequent endorsement by the tenth session of the General Assembly in 2024, and further discussions in the broader UNESCO context. Similarly, the working group invited the Secretariat to recommend possible criteria for defining exceptional cases concerning nominations, as included in the recommendations of the Part III meeting of the working group. The working group also identified the need to initiate deliberations on the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention and this included a continued discussion on how to enhance dialogue and communication among stakeholders of the Convention with a particular focus on communities, groups and individuals. The Secretariat is in close contact with Sweden that was generously supporting this initiative and plans to launch a Category IV expert meeting on this topic in the first half of 2023 to be followed by an Open-ended intergovernmental working group by late 2023. The Assistant Director-General also informed the Assembly that new nomination forms for the Lists for transfer requests and for International Assistance will be made available by the end of 2022 for nomination files to be included in the 2024 cycle for examination by the Committee at its nineteenth session. There will also be other technical adjustments, such as the terms of references of the Evaluation Body, which will be implemented accordingly.
10. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his presentation, which presented the result of hard work since 2018. The proposed revisions to the Operational Directives were a real achievement as they are ambitious in scope and technically complex. The Chairperson recognized the efforts of the working group that prepared the recommendations through the three-Part meetings. She gave special thanks to the Chairperson of the working group, Ambassador Oike, whose able leadership made it possible for the group to conclude its work, thanking the Government of Japan for its financial support throughout the reflection process. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.
11. The delegation of **Kuwait** thanked the Ambassador of Japan for his great leadership during this working group, as well as the Assistant Director-General and his team for the report. This process was indeed very inclusive, involving numerous consultations and discussions during and outside meetings through Bureau Members who relayed and discussed certain issues with their Groups. The delegation thus agreed with Japan and the Chairperson of the working group to approve the revisions without discussion, as mentioned in the Committee, appealing to the Assembly to approve them.
12. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Government of Japan for its generous contribution to this exercise and gave special thanks to the Chairperson of the working group, Ambassador Oike. It also supported the approval of the revisions without discussion but wished to highlight two points that have been discussed during the working group and during the Assembly. The first point concerned the exceptional cases or emergency cases, which absolutely required further reflection and eventually concrete text in the Operational Directives. The second point concerned criterion R.2, and the delegation reiterated its request to the Secretariat to urgently simplify the form, especially on R.2, as was done for R.5 in the past. The delegation also thanked the Government of Sweden for its generous support for the upcoming working group, adding that it had a very slight amendment to the draft resolution.
13. The delegation of **Belgium** thanked all the stakeholders involved in the process over the past few years, which led to the report and the revisions to the Operational Directives approved at this ninth General Assembly. The current proposals bring challenges to pressing issues, including the criteria in Article 16 for the Representative List and the criteria in Article 17 for the Urgent Safeguarding List, as well as the changes in the procedures for the examination and the inscription of nomination files. The amendments to the Operational Directives also focused on the mechanisms for transferring and removing elements inscribed on the Lists, and which now provide a transparent and orderly procedure, which Belgium welcomed. The delegation thanked Japan for supporting this process, as well as the expert working group and the Committee for selecting a number of proposals and building consensus. Nevertheless, it was important to take advantage, in the future, of the concrete proposals and ideas formulated by the more than 200 experts who took part in the online survey and the rich discussions of the meetings of category 6 experts within the framework of the global reflection. In this regard, it recalled document [LHE/21/16.COM/EXP/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-EXP-7-EN.docx) of the meeting of experts within the framework of the global reflection of May 2021, which is a source of relevant proposals that could still be exploited in the future if necessary. Belgium also supported the reflection on the potential of Article 18 ‘Programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage’ for the implementation of the Convention, thanking Sweden for supporting the process over the next two years. This could play a pivotal role in the development of the Convention, well beyond the inscription mechanisms, and the delegation looked forward to the work on this crucial process, hopefully, on the agenda of the tenth General Assembly in 2024.
14. The delegation of **China** thanked Ambassador Oike for his presentation, as well as the Assistant Director-General for the work done. As a member of the Open-ended working group and the Committee, China participated actively in the three meetings of the working group on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and the Committee’s sixteenth session and 5th extraordinary session. It welcomed the consensus reached on the specific issues tackled by the global reflection and it also supported the approval of the Operational Directives. The delegation reiterated its request to the Secretariat to prepare relevant recommendations on criteria and procedures for the submission of nomination files in exceptional cases so that the Committee can discuss these recommendations, thanking the Secretariat for its hard work.
15. The delegation of **Sweden** had been an active partner in the reflection process and it thanked the Government of Japan for supporting the reflection, as well as Ambassador Oike for successfully chairing the meetings of the Open-ended working group. Among Sweden’s priorities during this process, it was particularly committed to the strong involvement of civil society practitioners and bearers. Sweden is also a strong believer in the role that the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices can play. It was therefore very pleased to contribute financially to the reflection for the broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention. Concerning the draft decision, the delegation was well aware of how much time, negotiations and considerations lie behind the proposals and reminded the Assembly of the Committee’s consensus recommendation decided just a few days earlier. It was hoped that the General Assembly will adopt the text in the Annex as a whole.
16. The delegation of **Colombia** was also an active participant in the meetings, extending its congratulations to Ambassador Oike for his stewardship in running this process. Thanks also went to all the colleagues, as well as the Secretariat for providing all the documents and making it possible to conduct this work. The delegation also echoed those who spoke to recommend that the revisions be approved without discussion. Moreover, this global reflection will be a moment of transformation and maturity for the whole Convention, which is vitally important to breathe new life into the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
17. The delegation of **Estonia** commended the hard work accomplished over the last two years under Japan’s leadership. The guiding principle in the discussions was how to enhance the involvement of communities in all the mechanisms of the Convention and how to prioritize the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the listing system as a whole. It was hoped that all the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives would be adopted as a whole. Estonia was glad to note the decision to initiate a separate reflection on the implementation of Article 18, thanking Sweden for supporting this process. It looked forward to discussing lighter ways of promoting and disseminating good safeguarding practices. In the context of discussions on exceptional procedures, it was worth noting that in its Recommendation 11[[38]](#footnote-38), the working group invited the Secretariat to recommend possible criteria to define exceptional cases for the Committee’s consideration. This guidance will no doubt help debates in the future.
18. The delegation of **Japan** congratulated all the States Parties that had actively participated in the discussions of the global reflection of the listing mechanisms, as well as Mr Tim Curtis and Ms Fumiko Ohinata and their team for having effectively organized the meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The working group underwent a long process with three Parts, but it had achieved a lot. The delegation believed that it would be important in the future to strengthen the financial and human resources of the Secretariat to further improve the listing mechanisms. It looked forward to the new working group on Article 18 and thanked Sweden for its generous contribution. The delegation hoped that the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives, reflecting the outcome of this working group, would be endorsed as a whole without discussion.
19. The delegation of **France** thanked Japan for its support and work in this reflection. It supported the modification of the Operational Directives as proposed, and welcomed and underlined the importance of Recommendation 11 to have the Secretariat propose clear and precise criteria for the definition of exceptional cases requiring an accelerated procedure.
20. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** thanked the Ambassador of Japan for chairing the working group. The Netherlands is in favour of a dynamic and inclusive listing mechanism with lighter procedures for extended nominations, which would decrease the workload of the Secretariat. It echoed the recommendation that the reformed listing mechanisms should strive to place communities at the centre of safeguarding efforts and seek their broader and more active participation in all steps of the listing system. Indeed, the Lists are not an end but a means. As collective guardians of the Convention, States Parties must ensure that the Lists do not become an end in and of itself. The delegation respected the extensive work of the Open-ended working group and therefore it endorsed the draft decision.
21. The delegation of **Romania** thanked the experts for their great work in the reflection process. Romania supported better management of the number of elements on the Representative List in order to empower States in the implementation of safeguarding plans. The fundamental objective of the Convention is to create an international mechanism for the protection, conservation, safeguarding and visibility of elements. In order to avoid the growing number of elements and their implicit, involuntary devaluation by making it increasingly difficult to follow the dynamics, functions and meaning of these elements, a selection is necessary and obligatory for each State. The delegation also supported the role of UNESCO Category 2 centres in monitoring national safeguarding plans, which would lead to increased transparency and accountability of States in fulfilling their obligations. Another idea that was discussed during the working group was the realization, at the UNESCO level, of impact studies on the consequences of the inclusion of elements in the Representative List for the communities concerned. Romania supports the strengthening of the monitoring system at international, national and local levels in all relevant aspects, and it welcomed the new steps to be taken to reform the inscription mechanisms. Romania would continue to dialogue on topics aimed at the capacity-building programme, living heritage as a driver of sustainable development, and education for living heritage.
22. The delegation of **Madagascar**remarked that theglobal reflection on the inscription mechanism is a necessary step for updating the mechanism, as the future of the Convention is now. It thanked Group V(a) for its confidence in Madagascar in representing Group V(a). It thanked the Government of Japan and, particularly, Ambassador Oike for his expert chairing that achieved good results. Concerning priorities, the Assembly should keep in mind the Global Priority Africa. Regarding representation, Group V(a) is a numerically large group, but, for Africa, inscription is inversely proportional to the number of total inscriptions. Efforts must therefore be continuous for the sake of fair and just representation of intangible heritage.
23. The delegation of **Malaysia** expressed its appreciation to Japan for its leadership role and the support given to the Open-ended working group. It thanked the Committee and the Secretariat for all their work, as well as all the participants for their constructive suggestions throughout the meetings on the revisions of the Operational Directives. This will strengthen the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and ensure its smooth implementation. Malaysia agreed that all States Parties have a responsibility to encourage safeguarding at the national level and they should occasionally evaluate their respective management of the Convention. Malaysia supported the decision to approve the revisions to the Operational Directives as contained in the Annex of the present draft resolution.
24. The delegation of **Lithuania** thanked the Secretariat, the Government of Japan and, particularly, Ambassador Oike, as well as all the participating States of the Open-ended working group for the immense work carried out in the search for solutions. It welcomed and supported all the proposed amendments to the Operational Directives and looked forward to continued work in the Open-ended working group format, which will touch upon other issues of great relevance to the future of the Convention, thanking Sweden for its support.
25. The delegation ofthe **Republic of Moldova** expressed gratitude for the work of the Secretariat and for providing all the necessary support to Moldova over the years to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Operational Directives. In the context of the latest events in the world, it welcomed the changes that encouraged the submission of files to the UNESCO Lists, particularly the possibility of requesting both the inscription of the element on the Urgent Safeguarding List and a request for International Assistance. The delegation also welcomed the amendment under which States Parties are able to join elements already inscribed on the UNESCO Lists, demonstrating their [common] identity and cultural unity.
26. The delegation of **Denmark** acknowledged the efforts and results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which had reached important conclusions with thorough discussions on the proposed changes. The success of the open-ended method was reflected in the broad consensus expressed at the 5th extraordinary session of the Committee. The delegation therefore asked that the Assembly respect the work of the intergovernmental working group and adopt the recommended revisions to the Operational Directives without any changes. Denmark particularly appreciated that the proposed revisions highlighted the importance of involving communities, groups and individuals in the nomination process and securing their free, prior and informed consent. It welcomed further discussions on how best to secure their active participation and also in the upcoming working group on Article 18 of the Convention. Denmark thanked Japan and Sweden for sponsoring the previous and upcoming reflection processes, respectively. The delegation underlined the necessity of securing a sustainable system that allows the Secretariat to work effectively within the resources available, thanking the Secretariat for their efforts, not only in relation to the work on the listing mechanisms but also in their efforts to develop the Convention’s work in ways that best live up to its spirit.
27. The delegation of **Austria** thanked the Government of Japan and all the States Parties, experts and participants who joined the Open-ended working group that resulted in notable and crucial guidelines for the current and future work of the Convention. It also thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of and its support for this immense task. The importance of its outcomes could not be overemphasized, especially the consolidation of the current constellation of working methods of the Evaluation Body and the new Operational Directives. Many delegations that had participated in the meetings know that the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives are the result of intense debates and consensus, so it aligned with previous speakers not to re-open the debate, and it looked forward to the working group on Article 18 in the near future.
28. The delegation of **Brazil** appreciated all of the work undertaken, which is important not only for the functioning of the Lists but also for highlighting good safeguarding practices. For this reason, it believed that the recommendations of the working group will guarantee more active participation with the communities going forward, leading to a more inclusive and representative Convention. The delegation agreed that greater reflection on Article 18 will give the Convention greater visibility and hopefully better extend and transfer knowledge on good safeguarding practices. It also believed that important monitoring and reporting processes will be enhanced thanks to these revisions to the Operational Directives. States Parties are always looking for a better balance across the Lists and in the Convention, which is why the delegation believed in further reflecting on issues that go beyond listing. Indeed, the focus has been on listing to the detriment of other subjects that are equally urgent. For example, there are 529 elements inscribed on the Representative List and only 29 projects on the Register of Good Practices, which offer greater reflection on the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and sustainability, helping to contribute towards achieving the SDGs. From Brazil’s perspective, traditional knowledge needs to be acknowledged, not only as a way of safeguarding the community’s identity and well-being as well as the diversity of cultures, but also on how they can be mainstreamed into broader policies concerning creativity for sustainable development and resilience, for example, especially in this changing world. Brazil sought to focus on strategic advantages and the strengthening of good practices, while still recognizing that the Lists serve as an instrument to enhance greater mutual understanding, in which everyone benefits.
29. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked all those who had participated in the reflection process, as well as Japan for its generous contribution and Mr Atsuyuki Oike, the Chairperson of the working group, who guided the process in a very efficient and wise manner. It commended the Secretariat for its service and support, and for the very well-prepared materials and draft amendments. The delegation deeply appreciated the work of colleagues, experts and the members of the Open-ended working group. The discussions were open, long and thorough and achieved a broad consensus, which is reflected in the revised text of the Operational Directives and confirmed by its endorsement by the Committee. All questions had been answered by the Secretariat during the information session. Although it expected a minor revolution, the final recommendations were primarily of a practical and procedural nature. Nevertheless, very important issues were discussed, some of them for the first time, and much needed procedures were put in place. The delegation was ready to adopt the proposed text as drafted, and it believed in the importance and success of the next working group on Article 18.
30. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Secretariat, Japan and, especially, the Ambassador of Japan for the relentless work aimed at improving the listing mechanisms. It welcomed the proposed amendments on the Operational Directives and hoped that they would be adopted unchanged. Having had an expert on the Evaluation Body, the delegation appreciated the precious technical assistance provided by the Secretariat, which on many occasions is reaching its capacity limits. In this respect, it highlighted the need for extrabudgetary funding in order to increase the Secretariat’s capacity to cope with the workload. The delegation highly appreciated the work of the Evaluation Body. The priority should be to maintain this high quality and consistency in order to continue strengthening the credibility of the Convention and the equal handling of all. The delegation was happy to note that a compromise had been reached in this respect. More attention should, however, be paid to the current geographical imbalance by first setting priorities and, secondly, by focusing on capacity-building to improve the quality of submitted files. International Assistance will also help in the preparation of nomination files, but it could also be used for research, inventory or other activities that would help protect intangible cultural heritage. More focus should be paid to other aspects of the Convention. In this regard, Slovakia welcomed the initiative leading to a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention. Its experts and relevant stakeholders are looking forward to contributing to these discussions and it thanked Sweden for its support to the process.
31. The delegation of **Poland** joined the States Parties to thank the Government of Japan and, especially, Ambassador Oike, for his great leadership during the entire global reflection on the listing mechanisms. It also thanked the Secretariat for all the assistance provided to Poland. It was convinced that these new recommendations, established by the Open-ended working group, will improve the provisions of the Operational Directives and will strengthen the system of intangible cultural heritage protection. Indeed, the amendments and the proposed draft decision should be adopted as a whole. The delegation thanked all the States Parties for their constructive cooperation during the last years on this matter, particularly the Government of Sweden for its support to continue the necessary reflection on the broader implementation of Article 18. The delegation congratulated the newly elected Members to the Committee.
32. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked Ambassador Atsuyuki Oike, and the Government of Japan, for his wise and efficient leadership of this very long and inclusive reflection. It thanked the Secretariat and the experts for the great work and for providing support to this reflection process, the results of which will lead to more structure, sustainability and a more systematic approach to the work of the Committee. The delegation fully endorsed the proposed changes to the Operational Directives and looked forward to further reflection and implementation of Article 18, as well as a specific proposal on how to increase capacity and the ceiling of nomination files, as well as the human or financial resources in support of the Convention. It also supported defining clear criteria for exceptional cases to avoid further confusion. The delegation noted that this process had been inclusive from day one, with everyone invited to attend, and clearly adopted by the Committee and thus should now be endorsed in its entirety.
33. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Chairperson of the working group and the Secretariat for the comprehensive information. It was satisfied with the efficient work in advancing the reflection on the listing mechanisms. The wide consultation process brought results that are now reflected in the proposed revisions to the Operational Directives. The delegation thanked Japan for its financial support and effective leadership, which enabled the reflection process to be completed efficiently. The global reflection has led to a new initiative to reflect on the broader implementation of Article 18, which represents an important part of the future of the Convention as it shares experiences internationally. It thanked Sweden for its support, noting that a Category VI expert meeting will continue its reflection in the near future.
34. The delegation of **Jamaica** thanked Japan for its excellent leadership, the working group for its diligent work, and Sweden for its committed support. The procedures of this Committee had proved to be thorough and flexible, as tested by the pandemic and emergency situations. It congratulated the working group for its work to secure harmonization, good governance, inclusivity, equity and efficiency, a standard which Jamaica believes had been met. It was an honour for Jamaica to have served in the Committee. The traditions and collegiality have enabled the preservation of living heritage. Reform embraces the opportunity to build on these successes and it commended the work on the various mechanisms and methodologies, which open additional opportunities for dialogue and engagement between the Committee and States Parties, likely increasing the success of nominations. Each are invaluable gifts to the world. The delegation was confident that these outcomes and the upcoming reform processes will embrace even more deeply and widely the vocabulary and vibrancy of distinct cultures, achieve greater flexibility, the treatment of exceptional circumstances, attain simplicity in processes, and support strengthened capacity. Jamaica will continue to support this work, which ultimately increases knowledge and the understanding of people and sustainable development.
35. The delegation of **Norway** welcomed the global reflection process on the listing mechanisms and was grateful to the various stakeholders who participated. It thanked the Government of Japan for its generous support to the process, and it hoped for a more geographical representation between the elements inscribed. Preparing nominations remained challenging and resource-intensive, illustrating the importance of capacity-building initiatives and support from the Secretariat. The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices remains an underutilized instrument. Norway would like to see more even balance between the different listing mechanisms, echoing the remarks made by the Netherlands in that the listing mechanisms should not be seen as an end in themselves, rather, as one of several instruments for highlighting and disseminating intangible cultural heritage and its continued transmission, safeguarding and documentation. The challenging resource situation of the Secretariat needs to be kept in mind. Unless more resources are allocated, increases in the number of annual nominations would simply be unsustainable. This is a key question for the continued viability and sustainability of the Convention and to its legitimacy. It therefore supported the draft resolution and looked forward to the future work on Article 18 funded by Sweden.
36. The delegation of **Philippines** acknowledged the work that went into producing the amendments, welcoming those that set out a clear process for transferring elements from one list to another as well as for removing an element from the Representative List. It echoed the sentiment expressed by Denmark, particularly in ensuring the free, prior and informed consent of the communities, and it looked forward to the upcoming working group on Article 18 and fruitful outcomes. It hoped for the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole.
37. The delegation of **Ethiopia** expressed gratitude to Japan, the Secretariat and all those who participated in this meticulous task of amending and revising the listing mechanisms and Operational Directives. The delegation joined the remarks made by Madagascar on making Africa a priority. As an incoming Committee Member and State Party, Ethiopia endorsed the draft resolution and commits itself to the implementation of the amendment.
38. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the working group and the Secretariat for the excellent work carried out in the context of the reflections on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. It reiterated thanks to the Government of Japan and, specifically, Ambassador Oike, who provided valuable support to this important reform process. The delegation highlighted the quality of the approach that gradually involved the experts and then all the States Parties to allow broad participation. This enabled a broad consensus on the revisions now proposed and which reflected the desire to propose pragmatic and balanced solutions to the challenges of the Convention. Switzerland welcomed the results obtained by the working group, which were presented as a coherent and relevant set of revisions to the Operational Directives. Switzerland supported all the revisions as proposed and invited the General Assembly to do the same without reopening debate. It wished to continue the dialogue and the reflection around the functioning of the Convention, in particular, through the initiative launched by the implementation of Article 18, supported by Sweden.
39. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** congratulated the working group and the Secretariat for the exhaustive report, thanking the Government of Japan for its support, and congratulating Ambassador Oike for the dexterity with which he led the work and the result. The delegation actively participated in this working group and fully supported the revisions proposed.
40. The delegation of **Mongolia** commended the excellent work of the working group, and the Ambassador of Japan for leading this great process. It was fully in favour of adopting the recommendations. The delegation wished to emphasize that the human and financial resources of the Secretariat should be further considered in future work in the implementation of the recommendations, as expressed by the Secretariat and other delegations.
41. The **Chairperson** closed the discussion and turned to the draft decision on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. There were no comments or objections to paragraphs 1–5, which were duly adopted. An amendment was proposed by Palestine in paragraph 6 to extend appreciation to the ‘Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Atsuyuki Oike’.
42. The **Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group**, Mr Atsuyuki Oike, appreciated the kind words by Palestine and others. With due respect, he felt that it was inappropriate to include his name in the resolution given that the working group had worked together.
43. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked that it was not unusual to have names in draft resolutions, which had been the case in other assemblies and even the Executive Board. It proposed instead to leave the title ‘Chairperson’. The amendment had been proposed due to the voiced thanks and appreciation of Ambassador Oike by all the States Parties.
44. The **Chairperson** proposed to retain ‘Chairperson’ and delete his name. With no objections, paragraph 6 was adopted. Paragraphs 7 and 8 were adopted without objections. Turning to the draft decision as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 9 adopted**.

**ITEM 10 OF THE AGENDA:**

**USE OF THE RESOURCES OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**

**Documents:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/10*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-10-EN.docx)

[*LHE/22/9.GA/INF.10*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-INF.10-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 10*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/10)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 10 and the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. She explained that the adoption of the plan for the use of the resources of the Fund on the basis of a proposal submitted by the sixteenth session of the Committee is one of main prerogatives of the General Assembly as per Article 25.4 of the Convention.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** began by informing the Assembly that the Fund was in a healthy state with a balance of US$ 8.7M as of 31 December 2021, which excludes the US$ 1M Reserve Fund. The Fund is in a position to respond to the needs of States Parties and communities. Detailed facts and figures on the use of the Fund in the past biennium 2020/2021 are included in working document 10 and the INF.10 document. In the interest of time, she focused on the proposed plan for the use of the resources in 2022/2023, but the Secretariat remained available to answer any questions on the implementation of the Fund up until 31 December 2021. The proposed plan for the use of the resources of the Fund is outlined in the Annex of Document 10. It covers a period of 24 months (2022 to 2023) as well as the first six months of 2024. The budget for the first six months of 2024 corresponds to one-quarter of the budget for the period 2022 and 2023, as per usual practice. Compared to the previous plan, the proposed plan largely follows the same distribution (in terms of percentages) for each budget line. However, the proposal contains some technical adjustments. In line with the priorities of the Fund, the majority of the resources will be allocated to providing International Assistance to States Parties (budget lines 1, 1.1 and 2). The combined percentage of these three lines represented 62.6%. The budget in line 1 (International Assistance) will be assigned, once again, with the majority allocation of the Fund (50%), whereas 10% will be allocated to budget line 1.1, which concerns the Safeguarding and Monitoring Team created by the Assembly. The first adjustment proposed in this plan concerns budget line 1. It is a direct response to Recommendations 5 and 6 from the 2021 IOS Evaluation[[39]](#footnote-39). In its Decision[16.COM 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/13), the Committee authorized the Secretariat to use part of this line on an experimental basis to cover the monitoring and evaluation costs of International Assistance projects. These additional funds, separate from the grants allocated to the beneficiary States, will not exceed 10% of the approved budget for each project and would be managed directly by the Secretariat. They could, for instance, support the assistance of external experts to provide an independent evaluation of projects.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** turned to budget line 2 (preparatory assistance for International Assistance), which will slightly increase from 2% to 2.6%. This increase is linked to the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, which would allow the Fund to be used to immediately implement the revised Operational Directives approved under item 9. States will be able to request assistance in the preparation of requests for the transfer of inscribed elements between the two Lists of the Convention, as well as for inscription of elements on an extended or reduced basis. Budget line 3 (other functions of the Committee) will be maintained at 20% of the total budget approved. This line is dedicated to upstream work at the global level. Following the new approval procedure introduced by the Committee in 2019, the percentage breakdown under budget line 3 had already been approved by the sixteenth session of the Committee in 2021. It was now presented to the Assembly with a narrative description of the four expected results under this budget line, which corresponds to paragraphs 24–31 in Document 10. Funds allocated to this budget line will be specifically dedicated to the improvement of the management of knowledge information and monitoring of the Convention, the capacity-building programme, the integration of intangible cultural heritage into development plans, policies and programmes, with a particular focus on education and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations, and also the promotion of the objectives of the Convention through awareness raising and outreach.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** turned to budget lines 4, 5 and 6 (participation in the sessions of the Committee). These will be maintained in general of their respective percentages with slight adjustments based on the experience of the current biennium. Budget line 7 (costs of advisory services to the Committee) was proposed to increase from 6% to 7.7%. Similar to budget line 2, the proposed increase was linked to the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. This would allow the Secretariat to cover the additional costs associated with the assessment by the Evaluation Body of an initial number of requests that the Secretariat may receive in the near future for the transfer of inscribed elements between the two Lists of the Convention, the inscription of elements on an extended or reduced basis, and the follow-up of inscribed elements. Ms Ohinata was pleased to inform the Assembly of a positive development regarding support to the Convention since the beginning of 2022. On behalf of the team, she thanked the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific region (ICHCAP) for an earmarked contribution in support of the capacity-building programme, an additional contribution to the Regular Programme to support the MOOC on living heritage and sustainable development[[40]](#footnote-40); the Sharjah Institute for Heritage in the United Arab Emirates for an additional contribution to the Regular Programme to support the rollout of the capacity-building activities on periodic reporting in the Arab States region; Bulgaria for an additional contribution to undertake the renewal and evaluation of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe; the Government of Flanders Belgium for a contribution through a Funds-in-Trust modality to support the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in basic education in Namibia and Zimbabwe; and finally, France and Lithuania for recent contributions to the sub-Fund for enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat. The latter was particularly important to maintain the operations of the Secretariat because the total amount of contributions received in 2021 to the sub-Fund corresponded to only 3.5% of the target endorsed by the Assembly in 2020 (US$ 950,000 per year). The Secretariat was very grateful to all the donors for their generous commitment in support of the Secretariat’s work, which will be duly acknowledged in future statutory reports.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the detailed presentation of the plan for the use of the resources of the Fund. It was a very positive sign to see that the proposed plan would allow the Assembly to operationalize the outcomes of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of International Assistance projects. The Chairperson opened the floor for a general debate.
6. The delegation of **Philippines** spoke as a member of the Executive Board to strongly advocate for further mainstreaming of data-driven and evidence-based approaches in UNESCO’s programmes and processes, particularly in the Secretariat’s capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation activities. It believed that this crucial aspect can further expand the ability of living heritage to shape a prosperous and sustainable future for all people. Mindful of the Convention’s limited resources, the Philippines strongly supported the Secretariat’s proposal to increase its human resources so as to focus on the monitoring and evaluation aspects of its initiatives. Moreover, as intangible cultural heritage expands its intersectoral work, the Philippines also proposed to explore the inclusion of the International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development[[41]](#footnote-41) as a priority area, in addition to the International Decade for Indigenous Languages[[42]](#footnote-42). The Philippines emphasized the importance of diversity and equitable geographical contribution in the selection of staff, with a firm adherence to UNESCO’s required competencies.
7. The delegation of **Austria** renewed its appreciation of the Secretariat’s work. Noting the decrease in expenditure was no reason for concern as this was obviously largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was pleased to see the Fund in a stable and healthy state. The guidelines for the use of the resources of the Fund (in paragraphs 66 and 67 of the Operational Directives) determine that a large majority of the resources should be allocated to provide International Assistance to States Parties to supplement their national efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. This referred to budget lines 1, 1.1 and 2, which was clearly given in the proposed budget at about 62%. For Austria, it was important to maintain the allocation of budget line 1 at the highest level possible to enable States Parties to strengthen their safeguarding efforts. However, unfortunately, in recent years this budget has continuously been reduced and, for the first time, it no longer comprises the majority of the funds. The figures in 2016/17 had 59% going to budge line 1. In 2018/19, it was 52.55%. In 2020/21, it was 51.96% and now in 2022/23, it is 50% for the first time. The increase of budget lines in 2 and 7 is meant to cover the additional costs that may arise from the implementation of the outcomes from the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. Furthermore, new costs arise for the monitoring and evaluation of the International Assistance projects by external experts on an experimental basis. In this context, the delegation wished to know the costs taken from the Fund on the global reflection on the listing mechanisms. As in the early days of the Convention, the delegation assumed that the inscription process of elements is covered by the Regular Budget and did not affect the Fund. *Is it only the preparatory assistance for the transfer requests that is covered by the Fund?*
8. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** echoed the statement and questions posed by Austria. The distribution of the budget also shows where the priorities lie. It was pleased to see that, in accordance with Article 66 and Article 67 of the Operational Directives, the majority of the resources are allocated to providing International Assistance, an activity that directly improves safeguarding related to social, environmental and educational areas of work. The delegation believed that the purpose of the Convention was best served by prioritizing points 1 and 3 of the draft plan. The Netherlands also welcomed the priority given to monitoring and evaluating International Assistance programmes. It called upon the Secretariat to publish the results of these activities, whenever possible, into public-oriented content. It is clear that the ongoing discussion about the listing system and the required financial and human resources is inseparable from the activities and funding of the Convention. The consequence of strengthening the listing mechanism is that greater assistance will be required from the Secretariat, which means that more of the budget will go to the Lists, meaning less of the budget will go to other activities. This development is already visible in this proposal and in the last 10 years, for which the Assembly should keep a close eye. The Netherlands supported the draft decision. However, it believed that the current redistribution in the direction of the Lists should stop at this point, as the List is a means and not an end.
9. The delegation of **Jamaica** noted that this Convention will soon come of age as it celebrates its 20 successful years, commending the Secretariat for its work. Jamaica supported the suggestions put forward to allocate funds by percentage. It endorsed the approach that saw these resources directed to specific projects in areas of greatest need and impact. In this regard, the delegation underscored – among other important UNESCO priorities – the needs of SIDS with respect to intangible cultural heritage, which remain particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, a threat increased exponentially with climate change, as well as Priority Africa. The delegation appreciated and supported the use of funds to undertake strategies to increase the responsiveness of the Secretariat generally and, more specifically, to better support States Parties in their national efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. It underscored the importance of addressing the imbalance of NGO representation by region through use of the Fund to provide capacity development training. The delegation also endorsed allocations, as necessary, to increase capacity to monitor and evaluate projects. Jamaica welcomed the overall changes that will allow needed funds to be more readily accessed and delivered in a timely way, as well as being efficiently managed and accountable. It commended the flexible and innovative spirit for administrating the Fund. Jamaica appreciated the prospect of expert advice prior to submissions and welcomed the development of thematic initiatives, including actions on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and nonformal education and intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. Jamaica commended States Parties for their voluntary contributions and commended the Secretariat for the good management of the Fund. Regrettably, there were reported decreases but it looked forward to returning to the usual pace.
10. The **Chairperson** concluded the speakers list, inviting the Secretariat to respond to the questions.
11. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** noted three questions. She explained that the Secretariat’s proposal sought to keep up with the development of the Convention and, in this particular case, the decision just taken following the reflection on the global listing mechanisms in order to be able to immediately implement certain actions that will be effective under the new system. To answer one of the questions from Austria, budget line 2 foresees (under preparatory assistance) to both be able to cover the issue of the transfer from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List, but also the extension of an inscribed element. Thus, both packages foreseen by the new system are covered by the proposal. Concerning International Assistance, the amount attributed to budget line 1 is 50%, but sub-line 1.1 is 10%, which is attributed to the team supporting this mechanism, the overall amount was thus quite high at 60%. The Secretariat thus believed it will be able to continue to service all the States Parties and communities through this important international cooperation mechanism. The point raised by the Netherlands on the need to publish the activities that will be undertaken by the Secretariat on monitoring and evaluating was well noted. Indeed, this is a very important step for the Secretariat towards further operationalizing the International Assistance mechanism. It was recalled that under the 2018 and 2019 biennium an expenditure rate for this line increased significantly, with an obvious setback as a result of COVID-19. But it was hoped to be able to catch up and, at the same time, to build a robust, ground-based monitoring mechanism to be able to understand the impact of International Assistance, which will be duly reported to the governing bodies of the Convention.
12. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat and turned to the adoption of the draft resolution, starting with the adoption of the plan, as contained in the Annex of Document 10, which was adopted without objections. She then turned to the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, and with no objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 10 adopted**.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

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

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 11 and the election of the members of the Committee, recalling that the election results had already been informally announced. This time, the Chairperson was formally recognizing the new Members of the Committee in the resolution. The Chairperson recalled that the secret ballot was only required for Groups II, IV and V(b). She thanked the tellers, Ms Paola Gómez Barletta from Panama and Mr Julius Shoboi Mwahunga from Kenya.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** announced theresults are as follows: In **Group I**: **Germany** was elected with a clean slate. In **Group II:** **Slovakia** was elected with 94 votes, **Uzbekistan** was elected with 105 votes, Bosnia and Herzegovina received nine votes, Bulgaria received 26 votes and Estonia received 69 votes. In **Group III**: **Paraguay** was elected with a clean slate. In **Group IV**: **Bangladesh** was elected with 97 votes, **India** was elected with 110 votes, **Malaysia** was elected with 110 votes and **Viet Nam** was elected with 120 votes. Cambodia received 95 votes and Thailand received 75 votes. In **Group V(a):** **Angola**, **Burkina Faso** and **Ethiopia** were elected with a clean slate. In **Group V(b)**: **Mauritania** was elected with 82 votes, Iraq received 70 votes.
3. The **Chairperson** noted no comments and turned to the adoption of the draft resolution. With no objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 11 adopted**.

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA:**

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/12*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-12_EN.docx)

**Resolution**: [*9.GA 12*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/12)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 12 and the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that item 12 concerned the initiative to harmonize the Rules of Procedure of the General Assemblies in the field of culture, with working document 12 providing the background as how it came about in a larger context of a UNESCO-wide effort to improve governance. This initiative to harmonize across culture Conventions dates back to 2015 when the 38th General Conference of UNESCO[[43]](#footnote-43) invited all Conventions to discuss the follow up to the recommendation of the external auditor’s report to improve governance. The same session of the General Conference also established an Open-ended working group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO with the objective to pursue greater synergy, harmonization, efficiency and impact. The 39th session of the General Conference[[44]](#footnote-44) in 2017 subsequently examined the report of the Open-ended working group and endorsed the group’s recommendations. These recommendations are of particular relevance as they invite governing bodies of the culture Conventions, through broad consultation, to further explore, as appropriate, harmonization of the Rules of Procedure and coherence in decision-making procedures, taking into account their respective mandates and specificities. Regarding the 2003 Convention, its governing bodies discussed (between 2015-2019) the need to harmonize the Rules of Procedure between its governing bodies with the rules of other culture Conventions. Reference was made to the General Assembly Resolutions [6.GA 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/6.GA/11), [7.GA12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/12) and [7.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/13) and for the Committee Decision[13.COM 17](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/17) and Decision [14.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/19).
3. The **Assistant Director-General** further explainedthat the General Assembly at its eighth session in 2020 encouraged the Culture Sector to continue its efforts of harmonization while inviting the Secretariat to submit a new draft consolidated version of the Rules of Procedure at the ninth session of the General Assembly. In view of the similar needs identified by the other assemblies of the UNESCO culture Conventions, the 41st session of UNESCO’s General Conference in 2021 examined a set of Model Rules of Procedure[[45]](#footnote-45), from which assemblies could draw insights to explore possible ways to harmonize their respective Rules of Procedure, as appropriate. This session of the General Assembly was thus requested to examine the proposed revision to the Rules of Procedure to the General Assembly. The Secretariat was pleased to present a proposal in response to the request made at various sessions of the governing bodies of the 2003 Convention. The Assistant Director-General emphasized that the Model Rules of Procedure respected specificities and practices of each nominative instrument, inviting the Secretariat to provide an overview of the proposed revisions.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that given the volume and technical complexity of the revisions proposed, the Secretariat had invited the States Parties to an online information and exchange meeting on 31 May 2022 to explain the proposal rule by rule. The session was attended by around 150 participants from 80 States Parties. The [document](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-MEETING_ROP-2_EN.docx) for that meeting included a comparative table used during the session to introduce the proposed revisions one by one with details of the proposal, reasons for and sources of the proposal. The table included in the Annex of working document 12 was the same as the version presented at the information and exchange session, with the exception of minor linguistic adjustments. The proposed revisions meant that the current 19 Rules of the General Assembly will be revised to comprise 40 Rules. The proposed revisions were presented as a table, divided into three columns. The left column presented the current Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. The middle column showed the proposed revisions to the Rules based on the Model Rules (using strikethroughs for deletions and underlines for new wording). The right column contained the explanatory notes, with the reasons behind the proposals and sources, as appropriate. These explanatory notes are based on the commentary explaining the Model Rules of Procedure, as contained in Document[41C/55](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379755_eng/PDF/379755eng.pdf.multi). Presenting a quick overview of the main revisions, Ms Ohinata explained that the new provisions are presented by chapters. As an example, the proposed revisions start with a dedicated first rule on the functions of the Assembly, which did not figure in the current Rules. Another example of the new provisions concerned Rule 4 that establishes the conditions for the convening of ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the Assembly, which also did not figure in the current Rules. Rule 5, that codifies the ways the date and timing of the Assembly, was also not in the current Rules. The proposal also reflected lessons learned from the new ways of working as a result of the pandemic. For example, Rule 6 concerned online meetings of the General Assembly. Another example of revision concerned linguistic revisions. For example, the Model Rules of Procedure advocates the use of gender-inclusive language and refers to the United Nations Guidelines in this regard[[46]](#footnote-46).
5. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** elaborated that the proposal closely followed the Model Rules that was seen by the General Conference. However, on two provisions, the Secretariat proposed a slightly different version. The proposed Rule 11.1 replicated the current Rule 3 of the General Assembly of the Convention and formalized the existing practice with respect to the election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur. The proposal was to reflect the practice of the General Assembly, as well as to keep it in line with the practice of the Committee and elect up to five Vice-Chairs rather than up to four Vice-Chairs as the Model Rules of Procedure suggests. This is in order to achieve geographical equity, taking into account that the functions of Chair and Rapporteur are nominal appointments and the practice of the General Assembly and the Committee of 2003 Convention is that the delegation of the State Party of the Chairperson is seated in the Bureau to represent the Electoral Group of their State. The proposed Rule 12.2 replicated that current Rule 4.2 of the General Assembly of the Convention with harmonized terminology as regards the temporary replacement of the Chairperson during her or his absence. The proposal is to maintain the well-established and well-functioning practice of the Assembly in that the temporary replacement of the Chair is to be chosen at the discretion of the Chairperson rather than as the Model Rules of Procedure suggests, basing the selection on the use of the French alphabetical order of the Bureau Members.
6. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for discussion.
7. The delegation of **China** appreciated the efforts by the Secretariat to come up with Model Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly in the field of culture in general. It had no objections to the amendments proposed. However, Article 3.3 of the Annex significantly changed the meaning of the Rule as it currently stood because Rule 3.3 in the Annex states, ‘Representatives of other intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as other representatives or observers, invited by the Director-General may participate in the work of the General Assembly as observers without the right to vote and subject to Rule 16.3’. Because this new Rule profoundly changed the thrust of the Rule as it currently stood, the delegation called for Rule 3.3 to be written in accordance with the wording of Rule 2.2 of the current Rules of Procedure in the sense that observers invited by the Director-General may participate in the work of the General Assembly subject to the provisions of 7.3 of the current Rules of Procedure.
8. The delegation of **France** remarked that the revisions proposed to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly were generally positive in that they made the Rules more precise, as previously mentioned on the need to have greater precision. However, the point relating to the convening of meetings held remotely should be completed in order to guarantee that voting cannot be held online. As mentioned during the information meeting, there should be a provision concerning votes and voting methods.
9. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** supported China’s point concerning inviting observers to the sessions of the Committee. Having read through the revisions and listened to the comments made by France, it preferred to maintain the current wording by which meetings are to be held in person. This was also in line with the rest of UNESCO, such as the Executive Board.
10. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** echoed the remarks made by China. It was in favour of some parts of the Rules of Procedure presented by the Secretariat. However, the delegation did not think the new Rule 3.3 was necessary and it was thus in favour of deleting it and working on the paragraph that was already in the Rules of Procedure.
11. The delegation of **Türkiye** thanked the Secretariat for preparing the working document. It believed that this was a good start but that it might also need some improvements. It supported the remarks made by China, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Azerbaijan, adding that some revisions in the new Rules of Procedure went beyond the harmonization of Conventions. In that sense, the delegation also preferred to work on the former version of Rule 3.3 and to delete the current version. At the same time, it understood the needs of the Secretariat and could propose some improvements to Rule 3.2 as well.
12. The delegation of **Mauritania** supported the revisions to the Rules of Procedure in general but supported the position of China and Azerbaijan with regard to Rule 3.3.
13. The delegation of **Pakistan** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. Pakistan supported the comments made by China, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Azerbaijan, as well as Türkiye’s proposal.
14. The delegation of **Palestine** appreciated the work of the Secretariat on the Rules of Procedure as well as the positive outcome. However, it took note of the many concerns on Rule 3.3 and it therefore suggested deleting the new Rule so as to move forward by adopting the remaining revisions, especially as this is a continuous exercise. The Assembly could keep in mind the possibility of hybrid meetings, but the question of voting had also been raised in other committees and bodies. Indeed, it remained difficult to hold elections online and that this should be maintained *in præsentia*. The delegation suggested going with the proposal voiced by many delegations regarding Rule 3.3.
15. The delegation of **Oman** thanked the Secretariat and all who contributed to the work on the Rules of Procedure. It also supported the amendment raised by China on Rule 3.3.
16. The delegation of **Kuwait** thanked the Secretariat for the report. Kuwait also supported the draft amendment submitted for Rule 3.3.
17. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the working group, its Chairperson and the experts for their work. Firstly, in the amendments of the Rules, it is proposed to delete the plenary [under Rule 17, Rule 18 and Rule 19] with the reason for the proposal said to ‘provide more flexibility to the Assembly’. The delegation wondered, if not in the plenary, *where would such decisions be taken?* The delegation supported the remarks made by Palestine. There should remain the possibility to have meetings both online and *in præsentia* and in hybrid meetings. Moreover, even during the present Assembly there had been difficulties in receiving interventions from experts in the capitals who were not physically present, including the Secretary of the Convention. In a hybrid solution, they would have been able to participate. So, this should be kept as a possibility. Concerning the elections, the Assembly could consider some of the possibilities that were provided for the Executive Board, for example.
18. The delegation of **Switzerland** wasa little confused with the current discussion as there were two proposals concerning Rule 3.2 and Rule 3.3, however, there was a proposal to delete Rule 3.3. For the delegation, Rule 3.2 and Rule 3.3 are linked because they refer to the old version of Rule 2.2. It did not therefore agree to the deletion of the one of the two Rules.
19. The delegation of **Czechia** commended the Secretariat for preparing the revisions to the Rules of Procedure based on the model approved by the General Conference. Since these are technical and practical revisions, which had been widely discussed, it had hoped that the debate would not be opened on the various Rules. Like Switzerland, the delegation was also a little confused because the old Rule 2.2 was split into two new Rules 3.2 and 3.3, rendering it impossible to delete Rule 3.3, as this would mean that representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other observers could not take part in the Assembly’s work. It therefore wished to hear from the Secretariat as to whether the proposal by China was really possible.
20. The **Chairperson** noted the many questions addressed to the Secretariat and invited the Legal Adviser to address the points raised.
21. The **Legal Adviser** intervened because of the legal nature of the text, pointing out that this had been the subject of intensive work with colleagues from the Culture Sector and, in particular, the Secretariat of the Convention, with the valuable involvement of the Assistant Director-General of Culture. In order to clarify matters, he wished to introduce two concepts that might be useful. Article 13 of the Charter of the United Nations makes a distinction between ‘codification’ on the one hand and ‘progressive development’ on the other. When drafting a [legal] text, such as the one before the Assembly, there were actually two things taking place. The first one is called ‘codification’, which basically reproducing text that already exists, i.e. it repeats the rules. They may be put together in different ways, they may be explained better, but there is no change in what the rule represents. ‘Progressive development’ is the idea that we are trying to improve the rule and provide new ideas in order to perhaps make the procedure better before the Assembly. Indeed, a very big part of the proposals contained in this text are codification in that they do not change anything that had been done before, and there are some that are progressive development, which are new. In fact when reading the working document in conjunction with the Model Rules, together with their commentaries, as was submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO, it could be seen that the commentaries actually make it very clear when there is codification and when there are new proposals.
22. The **Legal Adviser** proceeded to answer the four questions. The first question concerned Rule 3.3. He explained that it is, for the most part, a codification, i.e. it already exists as Rule 2.2, which reads, ‘Representatives of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations which have concluded mutual representation agreements with UNESCO, as well as observers of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations invited by the Director-General, may participate in the work of the Assembly, without the right to vote, and subject to Rule 7.3’. The Legal Adviser elaborated that Rule 3.2 and Rules 3.3 makes a clear distinction between two kinds of observers: the representatives of international intergovernmental organizations that have mutual representation agreements with UNESCO on the one hand in Rule 3.2, and other organizations on the other hand in Rule 3.3. Essentially, Rule 3.2 reproduces Rule 2.2 as it currently exists, which is only for United Nations and other organizations that have concluded mutual representation agreements. It is thus a codification; something that already exists and does not pose a problem. Rule 3.3 is also a codification. The Secretariat simply separated Rule 2.2 into two different parts and thus it remained a codification, with one exception. The only exception is the addition of the terms, ‘as well as other representatives or observers’. This could be considered a ‘progressive development’ but it is also a practice that actually exists in several Conventions. The Legal Adviser was of the understanding that China and a number of delegations did not agree, but they actually are in agreement with the Rules but have doubts about this addition. The Legal Adviser understood that the proposal was not about deleting the entire Rule 3.3 (as this would actually change Rule 2.2 which already exists) but rather to delete ‘as well as other representatives or observers’, which is new in the provision. The Legal Adviser asked for a clarification if his interpretation was incorrect. Of course, if the Assembly were to decide that this was what they want, it would return to the original Rule and would not pose a problem.
23. On the second question with regard to voting online, the **Legal Adviser** recalled that this referred to the new Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure on online sessions, which is a progressive development, as it was not already contained in the rules. This is a necessity that arose in the past couple of years owing to the pandemic. As a result, it seemed generally accepted at UNESCO that when there are periods of emergency and exceptional circumstances, which render meetings *in præsentia*[[47]](#footnote-47) impracticable. It was thus an acquired measure applied in exceptional circumstances to allow UNESCO bodies to meet online. Rule 6.1 thus reflected this and was now generally acquired in the Convention. However, on a second related point, what became problematic in the past couple of years was not so much the fact of meeting online but *how* it is decided to meet online. *What procedure should be applied to the decision to meet online?* This is particularly acute for a body such as this General Assembly that does not have an explicit rule on consultation by correspondence, as, for example, the Executive Board has. Rule 6.1 and Rule 6.3 thus aim at providing a practical way of making such decisions, while respecting the majorities in the session.
24. The **Legal Adviser** turned to the question posed by France on whether a provision should be included that would clarify that when a session meets, [States Parties] cannot vote online. This was a matter for the Assembly to decide, that is, whether it wished to close the door on voting in any event whenever there is an online session, which would be acceptable. But the Assembly was made aware that if a provision is added that stipulates that no voting is possible in an online session then no voting would be possible in an online session under any circumstances. With regard to the question on hybrid meetings, the Legal Adviser explained that ‘hybrid’ it is not a legal term and had, unfortunately, been used to refer to meetings of different natures. For example, a meeting where members are present and observers are online had been referred to as a hybrid meeting. A meeting in which all members are present *in præsentia* but with some delegations having representatives online had also been called ‘hybrid’. Then there was the ‘pure hybrid’ meeting, which can imply one way or the other, making ‘hybrid’ difficult to grasp. For the time being, hybrid meetings had been so-named for governing bodies of statutory meetings, but few meetings at UNESCO had been purely hybrid, i.e. a delegation could decide to be online or *in præsentia*. Indeed, it has posed problems. For example, in the 1970 Convention, there had been significant problems in one meeting which was held in a hybrid format, resulting in long debate. This is the reason it was not proposed in the Model Rules.
25. The **Legal Adviser** turned to the question from Grenada with respect to Rule 40 and why ‘in plenary meeting’ had been deleted. He explained that this was for the purpose of more flexibility as the requirement ‘in plenary meeting’ was not actually required, as explained in the commentary where it was noted that some require it and some do not. By including ‘in plenary meeting’ it would mean that for the suspension of the Rules, the Assembly would need to meet to have a session. The ‘majority of two-thirds’ would be retained, but the Assembly would need to meet in plenary. The Legal Adviser explained that this was a progressive development that had been added in line with other UNESCO settings. To elaborate, the Legal Adviser gave an example when it might be useful to delete ‘in plenary meeting’. For instance, if the Assembly had to meet online because of a pandemic and, for some reason, interpretation in all six languages is not available online (which has happened in the past) then in order to meet online, the Assembly will need to suspend the rule that says that there are six languages of the Convention. However, the suspension of the rule requires a plenary meeting for which the Assembly will have to meet online to suspend the rule that the Assembly is actually suspending by meeting online. By deleting ‘in plenary meeting’, the Assembly would thus allow for the possibility, in an extreme scenario, for a majority of two-thirds to be obtained through other means, such as consultation by correspondence or similar.
26. The **Chairperson** thanked the Legal Adviser and returned to the list of speakers.
27. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** was curious to hear China’s response to the explanation provided by the Legal Adviser. *Was it its intention to delete Rule 3.3 entirely or only parts of the sentence?* The delegation echoed the remarks made by Czechia and Switzerland in strongly opposing the deletion of Rule 3.3. In its opinion, it was against the spirit of the Convention. For example, the President of the ICH NGO Forum would not have been able to speak at the General Assembly. The delegation was thus in favour of retaining, ‘as well as other representatives and observers’.
28. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation. Having listened to France’s explanation as to why Rule 3.3 should stay, it supported the deletion of Rule 3.3 but maintaining the phrase as in Rule 3.2, which includes, ‘as well as observers of intergovernmental and international organizations […]’.
29. The delegation of **Poland** supported the position expressed by Switzerland and Czechia on Rule 3.3, thanking the Legal Adviser for his clear explanation.
30. The delegation of **Morocco** supported China’s observations but, taking into account the explanations of the Legal Adviser, supported the deletion of ‘as well as other representatives and observers’.
31. On the issue of online meetings, the delegation of France clarified that it was not suggesting there should be no vote. In the case of an online meeting, in very exceptional cases, provided for in well-specified circumstances in the Rules of Procedure, the Assembly must obviously be able to vote. However, the vote must be held in person. Therefore, in the event of an online meeting, conditions must be provided for delegations to be able to vote at Headquarters. On the point relating to hybrid meetings, the Legal Adviser very clearly explained that there is no concept of ‘hybrid’ meeting in the texts of UNESCO and this could lead to much confusion and complications. So indeed the meetings are either face-to-face or held online on an exceptional basis. The delegation believed that it is, however, possible to invite experts to attend a meeting remotely but on the understanding that the meeting is held statutorily *in præsentia*. Finally, concerning Rule 3.3, France supported the current wording.
32. The delegation of **Cuba** shared the concerns expressed by some delegations on virtual and hybrid meetings. Indeed, there was a lack of clarity on this issue over the past two years of the pandemic. For the delegation, it is vital that voting and, in particular, secret ballot voting, is held in person. It would not be a good idea for the General Assembly to create a precedent that would then impact other fora. For example, the Executive Board was one of the first bodies that had to deal with this situation. By definition, this would cause problems for the smooth running of the Assembly, as was already seen with the 1970 Convention. The Assembly must therefore soon find a way to have voting procedures carried out in person. The delegation agreed that hybrid meetings created difficulties. For example, hybrid meetings tend to give precedence to delegations present in the room, making it more difficult to ensure fair representation. The meetings should either be held in person or virtually, but the notion of a hybrid meeting always leads to confusion and problems. With regard to Rule 3.3, the delegation also preferred to maintain the original wording.
33. The delegation of **Palestine** sought clarification from the Legal Adviser with regard to Rule 3.3, as it understood that this was the practice and no States Parties had opposed it. Moreover, it was already included in the original version, i.e. the part that had been deleted and which Saudi Arabia proposed to reintroduce. Thus, deleting Rule 3.3 and returning to the original version of Rule 3.2, as proposed by Saudi Arabia, would settle the problem. Regarding Rule 6 on online, hybrid or *in præsentia* meetings, the delegation understood that ‘hybrid’ was not yet a legal term. However, if the Assembly adopted this wording, it would legally become accepted. Obviously, there are some concerns when holding online meetings and voting practices. Indeed, with the current rule there is nothing provided regarding elections. If a meeting of the Assembly is held online there should be a provision for elections, as was applied for the Executive Board. *In præsentia* meetings are essential, but by making it hybrid it could facilitate [the convening of meetings], although a provision was indeed missing regarding elections in purely online meetings. Regarding Rule 40 and the deletion of ‘the plenary’, the delegation did not understand the explanation provided by the Legal Adviser. *What is the rationale behind the deletion?* In the case that an online meeting is convened and a rule needs to be suspended, even if it is online, it still constitutes a plenary session.
34. The delegation of **Türkiye** clarified itsearlier intervention in asking to delete Rule 3.3 but keeping Rule 3.2 in its original form (as per Rule 2.2), thanking Saudi Arabia for the clarity of its proposal. The delegation recalled that some delegations mentioned an information meeting on 31 May on the Rules of Procedure, which was not a drafting meeting. It was an opportunity for the Secretariat to gather opinions and concerns, where this concern was raised, including by Türkiye. The delegation reiterated that it wished to reintroduce the old, original Rule 2.2.
35. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation on the deletion of the plenary. In this case, and after having listened to Palestine, the delegation suggested to include the consultation by correspondence, agreeing that this was not really a plenary. Concerning the hybrid meetings, it agreed with previous speakers, recalling the case of the Executive Board. It was an online meeting and for voting, on some items, representatives had to physically be present at Headquarters. Thus, if it is not called ‘hybrid’ then it should be called something else. Moreover, with the evolution of the pandemic, the Assembly should indeed be cautious. The working group for the World Heritage Committee on Sites of Memory was held in a hybrid format and functioned very well and in the future these processes can be improved. Thus, they should not be excluded, if another word other than hybrid can be found.
36. The delegation of **China** explained that the Model Rules of Procedure was prepared by the Secretariat and the Legal Office and was available online, just prior to the 41st General Conference of UNESCO at the end of 2021. The delegation recalled that some Member States has said that they did not have enough time to review it thoroughly. The decision of the General Conference was thus to ‘take note’ of the Model document, ‘for which the said Assembly may draw insight to explore possible ways to harmonize their respective rules of procedures as appropriate.’ The delegation thanked Saudi Arabia and Türkiye for explaining its intention to keep the original Rule 2.2, replacing the current Rules 3.2 and 3.3. It was noted that during the information session organized on 1 July by the Secretariat, several countries, not only China, raised this concern with respect to the Director-General inviting other entities in addition to those cited in the original document. Hence, its wish to keep the original Rule 2.2 and delete Rule 3.3.
37. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Legal Adviser for explaining and clarifying the different elements of codification and progressive development. As there were no objections to the codification, the delegation interpreted the progressive Rule 3.3 as implying that the Director-General was able to invite relevant representatives to the General Assembly. Indeed, it would be a good thing to be able invite appropriate experts. The delegation thanked Saudi Arabia for its constructive proposal.
38. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** remarked that Rule 3.3 appeared to be the main issue, as mentioned by several delegations. It noted from the earlier discussions that representatives or observers are actually carefully screened and it is therefore something that needs to be protected. Including this language would actually dilute or weaken that process. For this reason, the delegation sough to have proper procedures in place to ensure the attendance of relevant representatives. Hence its wish to delete that part of Rule 3.3 or, alternatively, to return to the previous version of the Rules of Procedure.
39. The **Chairperson** remarked that the discussion would resume after lunch, reminding the Assembly of the informal consultation group on paragraph 7 bis with simultaneous interpretation provided in English and French.

*[Thursday, 7 July, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]:**

**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

1. The **Chairperson** recalled the morning session’s fruitful exchange that efficiently completed the examination of items 9, 10 and 11, ending with a general debate on item 12 on the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure, reminding delegates that there were still five items left on the agenda, including the suspended item 7.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** assured the delegates that the Secretariat was working to ensure the work of the General Assembly would continue into an extended session, if required, though after 6 p.m. interpretation would only be available in English and French. These arrangements would ensure that the Assembly concluded all the items on the agenda, while taking into account logistical and financial aspects of the meeting.
3. The **Chairperson** asked for the Assembly’s active cooperation to conclude all the agenda items in a spirit of consensus. There were fruitful discussions during the informal consultation group on item 7, but the Assembly would continue its examination of item 12.
4. The delegation of **Mexico** supported the intervention by Cuba, in particular, regarding its concerns about having very clear voting procedures, especially following the example of the 1970 Convention and its voting.
5. The delegation of **Colombia** preferred to retain Rule 3.3, but it also appreciated the option proposed by Saudi Arabia and was thus flexible on this issue.
6. The delegation of **Oman** supported the proposal by Saudi Arabia to delete Rule 3.3 and to retain the main text of Rule 2.2.
7. The delegation of **Switzerland** appreciated the spirit of consensus regarding the amendments to Rules 3.2 and 3.3. Ideally, it wished to retain Rule 3.3 in its current wording because the original version of Rule 3.2 did not mention ‘other representatives and observers’, which includes experts, scientists and community representatives. The delegation deemed it very important to maintain these categories of actors who are very useful in the debates and who contribute to the Convention.
8. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** also had concerns about hybrid meetings and even more so about virtual voting, agreeing that a mechanism should be considered, as suggested by Palestine and others. It joined the proposal to retain the original Rule 3.2.
9. The delegation of **Syrian Arab Republic** participated in the virtual information meeting on 31 May, which dealt with a lot of content, including amendments on the proposals and exchanges on the proposed revisions to the Rules of Procedure. This was an important process that interested a large number of States Parties, involving the entire Secretariat. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for the very high quality of follow-up and for the time devoted to setting up that meeting. The issue of Rule 2.2 was discussed at that meeting, and Saudi Arabia was right to ask that Rule 3.2 be retained.
10. The **Chairperson** closed thediscussion on this item and proceeded to the adoption of the draft resolution.
11. The delegation of **Türkiye** asked whether the updated Rules of Procedure would be seen on the screen or just the draft resolution.
12. The **Assistant Director-General** noted that the Assembly would first adopt paragraphs 1–4, in which there were no amendments, before going to paragraph 5 to work on the amendments in the text.
13. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections to paragraphs 1–4, which were duly adopted. She then proceeded to paragraph 5 and proposed to discuss only the provisions that were commented on earlier during the discussion, i.e. Rule 3.3 and Rule 6.1.
14. The **Assistant Director-General** took note that the morning’s discussion had led to a proposal which appeared to have reached consensus. The Legal Adviser could thus help in reviewing Rule 3.2 and Rule 3.3 so as to deal with the issues raised earlier.
15. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** referred to notes taken at the information meeting in which the Secretary of the Convention, Mr Tim Curtis, commented on this point in that it might be a compromise to only have ‘observers’ and not to include ‘representatives’. The delegation suggested to include ‘as observers’ in Rule 3.2 and to delete Rule 3.3.
16. For the sake of clarity, the **Chairperson** read out Rule 3.2: ‘Representatives of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations that have concluded mutual representation agreements with UNESCO may participate in the work of the Assembly as observers without the right to vote and subject to Rule 16.3’.
17. The delegation of **Türkiye** had suggested earlier to keep Rule 2.2 and have it reflected as Rule 3.2 in the new Rules of Procedure, noting that it had received broad support.
18. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the original text in Rule 2.2 would require one important change, which would include Rule 16.3 (in place of Rule 7.3).
19. The delegation of **Switzerland** noted that Türkiye’s proposal aligned with Saudi Arabia’s proposal to keep Rule 2.2. However, it sought flexibility from delegations to perhaps take up the amendment suggested by the Netherlands, namely, to keep in Rule 3.3, ‘as well as other observers’ and to delete ‘representatives’. The understanding is that ‘other observers’ also comprised the possible inclusion of communities, experts and researchers, which are very important for the Convention.
20. The **Assistant Director-General** explained thatthe drafting exercise on this legal text could not use the tracked changes mode as used for draft decisions. He thus invited the Legal Adviser to read out the proposal by Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands’ proposal.
21. The **Legal Adviser** confirmed that the proposal by Saudi Arabia was to delete Rules 3.2 and 3.3 and to replace them with the current Rule 2.2.
22. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** understood from the remarks in the room that Rule 3.2 can stay without the strikethrough and thus reflect Rule 2.2, but with the replacement of Rule 16.3 in place of Rule 7.3.
23. The **Legal Adviser** understood that Rule 3.2 will replicate the current Rule 2.2, except for the addition of Rule 16.3, which reflected a change in the numbering of the rules and was not a substantive change. Rule 3.2 would thus read, ‘Representatives of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations which have concluded mutual representation agreements with UNESCO as well as observers of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations invited by the Director-General may participate in the work of the Assembly without the right to vote and subject to Rule 16.3’. Rule 3.3 would then be deleted. This was the first proposal supported by a number of States Parties. There were two further proposals. The first proposal by the Netherlands saw the addition of ‘as observers’ after ‘may participate’. This is a clarification in that the organizations would participate in the work of the Assembly as observers. It was noted that ‘Observers’ was in fact the title of Rule 3 and was thus slightly redundant but, nonetheless, it was perhaps good to reiterate. The other proposal, voiced by Switzerland, asked for some flexibility by adding ‘*and* other observers’ after ‘as well as observers of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations’.
24. The **Chairperson** asked the Assembly to consider the proposal of Rule 3.2 by the Netherlands.
25. The delegation of **China** found the text on the screen unclear, voicing its support for Saudi Arabia’s proposal.
26. The delegation of **Portugal** sought clarification as to whether the proposal by Switzerland had been deleted so as to add ‘and other observers’ at the end of the penultimate paragraph.
27. The **Legal Adviser** explained that the presentation of the proposals on the screen reflected the request from China to have a clearer picture of the available options at this stage. The first option came from Saudi Arabia, which sought to return to the original wording in Rule 2.2 (except for the technical change of Rule 16.3). Option 2 was the proposal by Saudi Arabia with the amendment by Switzerland and the addition of ‘and other observers’.
28. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** remarked that the Assembly had to decide between option 1 or 2. Its proposal was to change the text that was initially Rule 3.2, deleting ‘as observers’ and changing to ‘Rule 16.3’. It did not propose to go back to Rule 2.2 but if it were the same text as Rule 3.2 then it could retain Rule 2.2, if not, it wished to keep the original Rule 3.2.
29. The **Chairperson** put to the Assembly option 1 and option 2.
30. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked that the two options were indeed similar. The amendment of Switzerland did not pose a problem, but it was not essential, and it did not change anything in practice elsewhere. It was recalled that the Director-General occasionally invites ‘other observers’, which are musicians, artists, and so. Thus, the addition of ‘and other observers’ did not change anything. A priori, the majority of delegations supported the proposal by Saudi Arabia, and the delegation therefore suggested to go ahead and adopt option 1.
31. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** supported the observation by Palestine, preferring to adopt option 1 as it was clearer language and was not open to interpretation. This was based on the understanding that the Director-General continues to act as had previously been the case.
32. The delegation of **Colombia** supported option 2 with Switzerland’s observations to include ‘and other observers’, but it was flexible.
33. The delegation of **Czechia** also tended towards option 2 remarking that the Legal Adviser clearly explained that the revision of this document was an opportunity to develop the Assembly’s work. The delegation wished for representatives of communities, for example, to be able to follow as observers, without the right to vote. This would help disseminate the activities of the Convention even further. Czechia considered the addition of ‘and other observers’ by Switzerland to be very important. However, it was quite flexible with regard to the proposal by Saudi Arabia, even though having both Rule 3.2 and Rule 3.3 was much clearer than just one rule, providing the text included ‘and other observers’.
34. The delegation of **France** favoured option 2 and the mention ‘and other observers’, especially as this was already the case and it did not see any impediment to mentioning it.
35. The delegation of **Poland** strongly supported option 2 because there is a big difference between intergovernmental organizations and international nongovernmental organizations and other observers.
36. The delegation of **Austria** aligned with Colombia, Czechia, France and Poland for option 2.
37. The delegation of **Türkiye** preferred option 1, adding that option 2 and the addition of ‘other observers’ did not make a big difference as invitations can be extended to any person or organization. Option 1 actually incorporated the previous Rules 3.2 to 3.3.
38. The delegation of **Kuwait** supported option 1 given that it was very clear, reflected past practice and had worked smoothly.
39. The delegation ofthe **Netherlands** sought clarification of the consequences of deleting ‘other observers’, for example, will general participants be able to take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, such as online, for example.
40. The **Legal Adviser** explained that option 1 meant returning to the current situation. For all intents and purposes, Rule 3.2, as proposed by Saudi Arabia, would be a return to or maintaining the current practice. Thus, whoever had been allowed to participate previously would continue to be allowed to participate. What was really important was to distinguish between the general public, i.e. people who can be present in the room, listen and follow online, and ‘observers’. Observers are people or entities who actually have the right to take the floor and speak, subject to Rule 16.3 and approval by the Chairperson, which would not be the case for the general public.
41. The delegation of **Ethiopia** tended towards option 2 as it believed in being inclusive, but for the sake of clarity, wished to understand what was implied by ‘other observers’.
42. The **Legal Adviser** was not sure of the practice of the present session but that the intention was to invite other personalities of significance, for example, experts who do not necessarily belong to intergovernmental or nongovernmental organizations. They could, for instance, be artists or an expert in a specific field of intangible cultural heritage. Otherwise, the current provision is limited to organizations.
43. The delegation of **Ethiopia** expressed its support for option 2.
44. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** remarked that its first statement on this matter was specifically to delete Rule 3.3 and go back to the initial version of Rule 2.2, but for the sake of compromise would also support option 1.
45. The delegation ofthe **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** took note that option 1 maintained the current practice, as explained by the Legal Adviser. In other words, all the participants present in the room and online will continue to be able to follow the Assembly. The delegation also noted that many delegations actually preferred Rule 3.3 but in the name of flexibility accepted to revert back to Rule 2.2 with its minor amendment. This was the proposal by Saudi Arabia, which also maintained the current practice. However, as some delegations felt that it would be problematic, then perhaps the observers that could be invited could be cited, but with the risk of excluding someone. The delegation remarked that since nothing was being changed, and observers, as they currently stand (who follow online and in the room) can continue as they have always done, it proposed the sensible option, which was to maintain the current practice. The delegation appealed to delegations to show a little flexibility on this issue.
46. The **Chairperson** remarked on the near consensus in terms of language and proposed option 1 and option 2, asking whether there were any objections to option 1.
47. The delegation of **Czechia** believed that it was a pity to close the door to other observers, such as experts in the field of competence of intangible cultural heritage, and it failed to see why the Assembly would deprive itself of this option.
48. The delegation of **Slovakia** supported the proposal by Czechia and Switzerland and others who spoke in favour of option 2, as it guaranteed inclusiveness in future debates.
49. The **Chairperson** asked the Assembly whether there were any objections to option 1. Poland and Portugal opposed option 1. Thus, both options 1 and 2 had opposition.
50. The delegation of **Netherlands** noted that Rule 2.2 kept the current situation and thought that it provided a compromise option.
51. The **Assistant Director-General** noted that there was no consensus on options 1 and 2. There was now a third option proposed by the Netherlands, which consisted of returning to Rule 2.2 (transformed into Rule 3.1) with the modification of Rule 7.3 for 16.3 (adjusted for numbering).
52. The delegation of **Ethiopia** felt that the Netherlands’ proposal was a very good compromise and was comfortable endorsing option 3.
53. The **Chairperson** asked whether there was opposition to option 3 seconded by Ethiopia.
54. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** asked the Legal Adviser to clarify a point. It was noted that the previous Rule 2.2 mentioned that observers and organizations could ‘participate in the work of the Assembly’ and it had been revised (in the new Rules) to provide more clarity in understanding the capacity in which they could participate. Hence, Rule 3.1 was introduced to add ‘and observers’. The delegation asked the Legal Adviser if it was acceptable to cite ‘participate’ without the *chapeau* ‘Observers’, in which case it would not oppose the consensus.
55. The **Legal Adviser** thanked Saudi Arabia for the question and agreed that it was better if the terminology was explicit but that it was not necessary insofar as the title of the Rule had been modified to read ‘Rule 3 Observers’, and thus it went without saying that everyone mentioned in Rule 3 are observers. He noted the consensus in the room and reiterated that there would be no legal objection to not including ‘Observers’.
56. The delegation of **Poland** understood that Rule 3.1 is entitled ‘Observers’, but it wished to see Rule 3.1 clearly projected onto the screen so as to be able to see the observers under Rule 3.1, as well as the following paragraphs.
57. The **Chairperson** asked whether there were any objections to the proposal by the Netherlands.
58. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** wished to join the consensus for option 3 following the clarification by the Legal Adviser. The delegation requested that the explanation of the Legal Adviser be included in the oral report.
59. The **Chairperson** thanked Saudi Arabia for its flexibility.
60. The delegation of **Poland** asked the Legal Adviser to explain the difference between option 2 and the original Rule 2.2.
61. The **Legal Adviser** explained that there was no difference and was in fact the same provision, with just the technical adjustment in the new reference to Rule 16.3.
62. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** was prepared to join the consensus but, as mentioned by Saudi Arabia, wished to have the explanation by the Legal Adviser included in the oral report. It would also have liked to have the rule heading with ‘Observers’. However, the text in Rule 2.2 would also be acceptable.
63. The delegation of **Madagascar** also supported option 3 proposed by the Netherlands and supported by Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
64. The delegation of **Lebanon** also joined the consensus and supported option 3.
65. The delegation of **Poland** thanked the Legal Adviser for his clarification, explaining that it wants a consistent decision. It was very much in favour of the consensus on this very important issue, especially when some NGOs are accredited in one’s own countries and they do not have international recognition yet are important to this Convention. Hence its earlier request to see the difference between option 3 and option 1, which was not clearly shown on the screen.
66. The **Assistant Director-General** clarified that option 1 in its Rule 3.1 had at the end of the paragraph the following text, ‘may participate in the work of the Assembly as observers without the right to vote’. Option 3 does not have this text. In the original Rule 2.2 there is no mention of observers at the end of the text.
67. The delegation of **Lebanon** suggested that all questions, suggestions and clarifications be mentioned in the oral report in an effort to move forward.
68. The delegation of **Poland** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his clarification but noted that he had read out Rule 3.1 and not Rule 3.2, which had been requested. In addition, it was difficult to make a decision on the options when they were not clearly shown on the screen.
69. The **Assistant Director-General** reiterated that option 1 and option 2 were different, but that option 3 achieved consensus so it was decided to adopt this option. As mentioned by Lebanon, all remarks would be included in the oral report.
70. The delegation of **Palestine** agreed with the explanation provided by the Assistant Director-General. It also fully supported the proposal by Ethiopia and the Netherlands and supported by others. The delegation fully understood the concern by Poland, but the practice is that the Director-General may invite other observers. There is no impediment to this practice. The second request, which the delegation also supported, was to have all these concerns reflected in the oral report. Moreover, this is a continuous exercise and States Parties can amend any Article in the future if considered necessary. For the time being, option 3 covered all concerns.
71. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections to Palestine’s remarks. She then turned to Rule 6.1.
72. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the second point concerned Rule 6 and its ‘online’ aspect. There was no issue in Rule 6.1, but in Rule 6.2 the point raised [by France] was that voting cannot take place in an online modality and had to take place *in præsentia*.
73. The delegation of **Palestine** did not agree that voting cannot take place in case of online meetings. The idea was to ensure that there exists a provision in the Rule for elections during online sessions, as was the case for the Executive Board.
74. The **Legal Adviser** understood that there was a concern with respect to elections that take place by secret ballot, in particular, in the course of a session held online. A number of delegations expressed the opinion that in a case of an online meeting it should be made clear that elections by secret ballot, which is the only case allowed under the Rules of Procedure, be clarified in the text. The Legal Adviser thus proposed to add a sentence that would state that elections by secret ballot would be held *in* *præsentia* in an online meeting, should the Assembly so wish.
75. The delegation of **France** thanked the Legal Adviser for his correct interpretation. Indeed, in the case of an online session, the vote by roll call would be possible online, but the vote by secret ballot must absolutely take place *in præsentia*. Modalities had been adopted for the Executive Board at the General Conference, and the delegation wished to see it repeated here.
76. The delegation of **Türkiye** remarked that it had a couple of points for improvement with regard to some Rules of Procedure and would voice them at a later stage. In the case of Rule 6.1, the delegation agreed with France and others that a sentence should be introduced to clarify the situation. In this regard, the delegation proposed to add after ‘impracticable’, the following text, ‘For secret ballots, which shall be conducted in person, the Secretariat should make necessary preparations and notify the States Parties in advance with regard to the voting procedures and arrangements’.
77. The **Chairperson** asked the Assembly whether there was consensus on this formulation.
78. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** agreed that secret ballot voting should be conducted in person, but it was not sure whether the Assembly should make a specific vote in this sense as it preferred to have any voting conducted in person. In reality, this actually happens at UNESCO, as was seen for example, in the Executive Board and other fora. In this way, it would ensure that there are no issues of connectivity or other issues that would prevent a Member State from exercising its vote on the same footing as others. The delegation therefore preferred to have more general language and thus proposed, ‘Any election or voting shall be conducted in person and the Secretariat should make the necessary preparations and notify the States Parties in advance with regard to the voting procedures and arrangements’.
79. The delegation of **Palestine** had no problems with the first part amended by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela but wished to add that the Secretariat, in notifying the States Parties in advance, should also provide the place and time of the ballot. It sought to add this to the proposed wording.
80. The **Legal Adviser** noted the general consensus but with two different yet similar positions. One position was most notably expressed by France, with support from other delegations, that the Rules of Procedure should contain a provision which states that elections by secret ballot should be held *in præsentia* in an online session. As regards other kinds of voting, the door was left open for those to take place online. The other position expressed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is that all kinds of voting, i.e. to include voting by roll call or by a show of hands, should also be held *in præsentia.* This implied that should the Assembly be in a situation in which it cannot meet *in præsentia*, for the purposes of voting, it should make arrangements for any kind of vote to take place *in præsentia*. The Assembly thus had to decide on its preferred position, after which a draft text and references could be provided for its inclusion.
81. The delegation of **Estonia** noted that the main issue concerned the secret ballot, explaining that it is important to be flexible and Zoom meetings over the past two years had shown that it was possible to vote by a show of hands. It was thus quite logical to keep the possibility of voting online when it concerns a show of hands or even by roll call. However, the delegation agreed that voting by secret ballot is much more difficult and, for this purpose, there should be a sentence that deals with the issue of secret ballots that should be held *in præsentia*.
82. The delegation of **Cuba** shared the concerns expressed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the understanding that everybody understands the difficulties that some countries have in connecting online. It was particularly worried about hybrid meetings which generate really complicated situations in which some people are in person and others are online, and then for some delegations it can actually be impossible to get an online connection if they do not have a representative in Paris. This would mean that they cannot take part in voting. This is a situation that has happened in other sessions. The delegation believed that it would be really complicated to limit measures to only secret ballot voting when looking at difficulties experienced by some countries, as seen with SIDS for example.
83. The delegation of **Grenada** understood the concerns of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba and, of course, agreed on the importance of *præsentia* voting in cases of secret ballot. However, as mentioned by Estonia, sometimes a roll call vote on one particular item or a show of hands or equivalent should be possible online. Thus, wording could be added that considers both possibilities. The delegation also suggested replacing *scrutin* in the French version by ‘vote’ as occasionally the Assembly can vote on an article, word or an amendment, which is not a *scrutin*.
84. The **Assistant Director-General** took noteof the consensus to introduce wording related to the secret ballot. There were also delegations asking to cover other types of elections.
85. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** referred to the General Conference in 2021 when different mechanisms were examined for online voting and a decision was taken that it would be much better if voting were conducted in person. The delegation thus wondered about the logic of creating a precedent that some forms of voting can be done online when it was clear at the last General Conference that there was a preference for in-person voting. Moreover, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was one of the countries affected by connectivity problems. The question was how to make sure that every delegation’s vote is duly registered during online voting. There are ways of doing this, as had already been done at the United Nations, with World Heritage and the 1970 Convention. People could come to the room and vote in person. The delegation did not understand why this could not be extended to other forms, such as roll call. Stating that all voting will take place in person would be the simplest option, as had been discussed in the Executive Board and the General Conference, and there was no need to reinvent the wheel.
86. The delegation of **Cyprus** supported the position taken by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, recalling the last meeting of the Committee of the 1970 Convention in which there had been problems with voting online and also in person. It was also mentioned that the word ‘hybrid’ should no longer be used in invitation letters for a vote. It must explicitly state whether the Body is having a face-to-face meeting and/or online, but that the vote is *in* *præsentia*. Given the many problems with the word ‘hybrid’ during the last Committee of the 1970 Convention, it was important to be clear in this type of situation.
87. The **Chairperson** invited the Legal Adviser to share his experience and a proposal.
88. The **Legal Adviser** agreed and recalled the problems encountered in the context of the 1970 Convention, as highlighted by Cyprus. He emphasized the fact that those problems arose because the session took place in a hybrid format and hence why he cautioned the Assembly about holding hybrid sessions. However, this is not necessarily the case for a pure online session, which is the case under Rule 6. The Legal Adviser also agreed with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that the Assembly should take note of the extensive discussions that took place in the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO on this issue. He also pointed out that the working groups had worked on this issue and had agreed that voting by roll call was indeed possible in an online session, while it expressed concern for voting by secret ballot. He quoted from the recommendations of the Open-ended working group on the working methods of the 41st session of the General Conference, which read, ‘considering the technological means currently available to the Secretariat, secret ballots will be held *in* *præsentia*. All possible efforts will be made to ensure the participation of all members in a secret ballot’. Thus, according to the working group, the only case in which this was required was for secret ballots. For other kinds of voting, particularly roll call, the working group came to the conclusion that these were possible with necessary arrangements in the framework of an online session.
89. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked that it was clear that for an election under a secret ballot, voting shall take place in person. It thus suggested to keep the first sentence as it stood for secret ballot, and adding another sentence regarding other methods of voting, for example, a show of hands or roll call, which could read, ‘preferably in person’, asking the Legal Adviser to help draft a new sentence along these lines.
90. The delegation of **Panama** added to the remarks by Grenada and Estonia in that in this post-pandemic reality, the Assembly could be faced with another situation that requires an online vote by roll call with no possibility to do so in person. Taking this reality into consideration, as mentioned by the Legal Adviser and as seen in other Conventions, space should be left open for other types of voting. In addition, it is important to take into consideration the realities faced by countries like Cyprus, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba regarding connectivity. Solutions can be agreed upon but it is important to leave space open in today’s reality.
91. The delegation of **Argentina** supported the concerns voiced by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, adding that it is important to make sure that all voting is at least fair if voting cannot take place in person. The delegation would prefer that all voting be conducted *in* *præsentia* but could go along with the proposal by Palestine to add, ‘preferably in person’.
92. The **Chairperson** noted that the Legal Adviser had offered to propose a draft text.
93. The **Legal Adviser** explained that, as a general philosophy, it is always best to have one paragraph/one rule rather than to have too many rules in the same paragraph, otherwise it becomes difficult to read and follow. He proposed to cut and paste the proposed wording [by Türkiye and Palestine] up to ‘impracticable’ to create a new Rule 6.4. In this way, Rule 6.1 simply and clearly states that the Assembly may hold a meeting online. Rules 6.2 and 6.3 concern *how* the Assembly reaches its decision to meet online. Rule 6.4 will outline what happens when the meeting is held online, which he proposed to read as, ‘Elections by secret ballot held pursuant to the present Rules in the course of an online session shall be conducted *in præsentia*. The Legal Adviser believed that this first element had been widely accepted by everyone. The second sentence in Rule 6.4 would address Türkiye’s and Palestine’s proposal, which would read, ‘The Secretariat shall make the necessary arrangements therefor, including the place and time of the election, which shall be notified to States Parties in advance of the ballot. A third sentence would read, ‘Other voting held pursuant to the present Rules shall preferably be conducted *in præsentia*’. This was the latest proposal by Palestine. The first sentence states that elections by secret ballot, the only case of secret ballot in this Convention, are to be held *in* *præsentia*. This conforms to the practice followed by the General Conference and the Executive Board. The second sentence states that the Secretariat shall make the necessary arrangements and provide the information to the delegations in advance, and the third sentence provides the notion of ‘preference’, but it is not an obligation, that the voting would be conducted *in* *præsentia*. This proposal was purely technical and reflected the political consensus in the room and not intended as the Legal Adviser taking any political position.
94. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Legal Adviser for his proposal agreeing that general elections are indeed conducted by secret ballot, however, the rules did not prevent other kinds of voting by secret ballot. The delegation referred to a Rule in which voting is normally by a show of hands. The delegation thus suggested to add ‘and other voting’, which would read, Elections and other voting by secret ballot held pursuant […]’, as other kinds of voting, by secret ballot, other than for elections, should not be omitted.
95. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** thanked Palestine for the proposal and the Legal Adviser for integrating Palestine’s proposal, which it could support. It wished to see recorded in the summary records that the Assembly, extraordinarily, with the agreement of States Parties, respects and takes into consideration the fact that every State Party needs to have their vote duly registered on an equal footing, bearing in mind any difficulties related to connectivity etc. [in the event of online voting]. The delegation reiterated its thanks to the Legal Adviser for his patience and, especially, for his useful and constructive input.
96. The **Chairperson** took note of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s request, inviting the Legal Adviser to respond to Grenada’s question.
97. The **Legal Adviser** did not agree with Grenada’s interpretation of Rule 12. Contrary to the Rules of Procedure of other bodies, for example, the Executive Board, the Rules of Procedure of this Assembly do not provide for secret ballot except in the case of election. This means that secret ballot is not possible in the General Assembly except in the case of election. As to why Rule 12.5 refers to the fact that ‘Voting shall normally be by show of hands’, it had to be read in the light of Rule 12.6, which states, ‘When the result of a vote by show of hands is in doubt, the Chairperson may take a second vote by roll-call. A vote by roll-call shall also be taken if it is requested’. Thus, in his interpretation, voting is normally by show of hands. In certain cases, i.e. in cases that are not normal, it would involve a roll-call, but it is not possible to vote by secret ballot on anything other than what is provided for in Rule 15.1, which explicitly states that, “The election of Members of the Committee shall be conducted by secret ballot […]’.
98. The **Chairperson** noted the consensus for the proposal by the Legal Adviser, which was duly adopted without objections.
99. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Legal Adviser for his interpretation of the text. However, it wished to state on record that occasionally when there is sensitive voting in other fora, other than this Assembly, a secret ballot is possible and can be requested. The delegation nevertheless took note that, according to the Legal Adviser’s interpretation, there is no other possibility in this Assembly.
100. The delegation of **Türkiye** raised two points on the new Rule 5.2 and Rule 7.4. Rule 5.2 states, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session.’ However, no time limit or deadline for the extraordinary session was provided, which is specified in other Conventions of UNESCO. The delegation thus suggested wording to be placed at the end of the paragraph, which would read, ‘In any case, the extraordinary session must be scheduled within the next 45 days after the decision taken by the Assembly’. It suggested that the Secretariat define an appropriate time limit.
101. The **Legal Adviser** did not fully understand what was implied by the 45 days after the decision taken by the Assembly. *What decision?*
102. The delegation of **Türkiye** explained that it was inferred in the beginning of Rule 5.2 where it is stated, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly’, which refers to the decision of the Assembly to hold an extraordinary session under Rule 5.1.
103. The **Legal Adviser** explained that if the date had been decided by the Assembly then it will be scheduled for the date the Assembly had determined. If it is *not* determined by the Assembly, there would be no decision and the Director-General determines the date. The Legal Adviser failed to see how the deadline would apply.
104. The delegation of **Türkiye** explained thatif the Assembly cannot decide on the date, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session. In this instance, the extraordinary session should be within 45 days after the decision is taken to convene the extraordinary session. But in the Rules, no date is provided in this case.
105. The **Legal Adviser** sought clarification on the date from which the deadline is counted. If the Assembly does not decide, the Director-General has 45 days, but from when, when there is no decision taken by the Assembly.
106. The delegation of **Türkiye** remarked that Rule 5.1 reads, ‘The Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary (sic) session’, so *when should the extraordinary session be convened?* The Assembly can therefore take a decision to convene an extraordinary session but not the date, which will be determined by the Director-General. If that is the case, the Director-General should define the date, for example, within 45 to 60 days, after the decision to hold an extraordinary session is taken by the Assembly.
107. The **Chairperson** asked the Legal Adviser to clarify between Rule 5.1, which refers to an ‘ordinary’ session, and Rule 5.2, which refers to an extraordinary session.
108. The **Legal Adviser** invited the Assembly to read Rule 4 on the organization of the Assembly, which states that the Assembly may meet in two ways: in an ordinary session and in an extraordinary session. Rule 4.1 states that ‘The Assembly meets every two years in ordinary session’, which is a principle. Rule 4.2 states when an Assembly can be convened in an extraordinary session, which may be convened in three different ways: i) if the Assembly decides to convene an extraordinary session; ii) if it is requested to do so by the Intergovernmental Committee; and iii) if a third of the States Parties request it. So, *how does the Assembly make the decision to convene?* Once the decision has been made to convene a session, Rule 5.1 states that ‘The Director-General shall determine the date of the ordinary session […] and shall communicate that date […]’. Rule 5.2 then states, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly’, which is the only organ that can impose it, it is the Director-General who may determine the date of the extraordinary session and the Director-General shall communicate such a date to all. The Legal Adviser was of the view that this was sufficiently clear and that the request will be honoured. The view of Palestine is that it is not clear enough. The Legal Adviser thus looked forward to hearing how best to better this understanding so as to draft an appropriate text. In any case, he advised against referring to a deadline of 45 days from the date by which the Assembly has taken its decision in case there is no decision from the Assembly.
109. The delegation of **Palestine** understood the Legal Adviser’s clear explanation, but also the concern expressed by Türkiye. As a matter of fact, as mentioned by the Legal Adviser, the General Assembly, the Committee or one-third of States Parties can request an extraordinary session. The idea is that if the General Assembly does not decide on the date then it is the Director-General. As an example, if one-third of States Parties request an extraordinary session, there is no Assembly. In this case, the date shall be determined by the Director-General. However, the Director-General may decide to hold this extraordinary session in one or two months’ time or even longer. Thus, there should be a duration, after the request, during which the extraordinary session should be held, which was the purpose of the amendment by Türkiye. This could be included in Rule 5.2, which would read, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session that shall not exceed 30 days’ (or 45 days). In this way, a deadline is set for the convening of the session, which would otherwise be open and the Director-General may in the meantime have other priorities.
110. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** aligned with the clear explanation by Palestine. It also understood Türkiye’s concerns and it thus requested the Legal Adviser to draft some clearer wording that stipulates a minimum or maximum timeframe in which the extraordinary session should be convened. This would ensure that such a meeting is not delayed or postponed indefinitely and that it is clearly placed on UNESCO’s agenda.
111. The **Legal Adviser** fully understood the request, however, he was not aware of any other case in which such a provision exists; 45 days is not foreseen in the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference or others. After all, the Director-General does not have any reason to postpone the convening of a session, except for reasons of logistics. There might be situations where it is not logistically possible to hold a session within 45 days. Holding an extraordinary session of the General Assembly might be complicated, there might be no rooms available, and so on. The Legal Adviser gave the example of a decision taken on 15 July and, within 45 days, the Assembly must gather, which would mean by 31 August [during the summer holidays]. Normally, however, there would be no reason to delay more than is necessary. As a Legal Adviser, he could not pronounce on the issue as it was a political decision for the Assembly to decide. However, once again, if this provision is included and the situation arises in which, for whatever reason, the meeting cannot be convened within 45 days it would be a breach of the rule. Having said that, the Legal Adviser could propose a wording aligned with the request by Türkiye in Rule 5.2, which would read, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session, which shall then be set within 45 days following the date of the request referred to in Rule 4.2’. The Legal Adviser still maintained his comment on the substance.
112. The **Chairperson** asked Türkiye whether it agreed with the wording.
113. The delegation of **Türkiye** fully agreed with the wording but if 45 days is not enough to organize an Assembly, it would refer to the Secretariat and the Assembly to define a time limit, possibly 90 days. The main concern was simply to set a deadline to convene the extraordinary session. The delegation thanked the Legal Adviser for the proposed wording.
114. Thanking the Legal Adviser, the delegation of **Palestine** understood the remark on the inconvenience of a June date that would set a deadline in August. Hence, the delegation suggested to add ‘if possible’ at the end of the sentence, which would read, ‘[…] shall then be set within 45 days following the date of the request, if possible’.
115. The **Chairperson** noted that there was a consensus.
116. The delegation of **Kuwait** fully agreed with the Legal Adviser that occasionally a situation may arise that renders a commitment impractical from a logistics perspective. The delegation thus suggested the addition of ‘unless logistically not possible’, which would give the Secretariat more flexibility.
117. After listening to the Legal Adviser, the delegation of **Ethiopia** was convinced that it was not necessary to include a specific time line. The Assembly should exercise some common sense and have confidence in the Director-General, and the addition of a date does not make sense. There could be many situations that arise that would render 45 days impractical. The delegation suggested replacing the 45 days with ‘as soon as possible’.
118. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation. Initially, it leaned towards Ethiopia’s position, but looking at the proposed wording with Kuwait’s ‘logistically not possible’ felt it was more realistic and could accept this proposal.
119. The delegation of **Greece** agreed with the proposal by Ethiopia, but it could also go along with the suggestion by Kuwait rather than Palestine’s amendment ‘if possible’. As this would open up to an explanation as to why it would not be possible.
120. The delegation of **Palestine** withdrew its amendment, adding that it supported the amendment by Kuwait. If there was no consensus, it could also accept the proposal by Ethiopia, although it preferred Kuwait’s amendment.
121. The **Chairperson** asked whether there was opposition to the wording, ‘as soon as possible’.
122. The delegation of **Türkiye** preferred the proposal with time limits and Kuwait’s amendment.
123. The **Chairperson** asked Türkiye whether it opposed the phrase, ‘as soon as possible’.
124. The delegation of **Türkiye** remarked that the addition of ‘as soon as possible’ would mean deleting ‘within 45 days’, thus, it preferred to keep ‘within 45 days, unless logistically not possible’. It was thus opposed to ‘as soon as possible’. For the sake of giving more time, the delegation suggested to replace 45 days with 60 days. Even if the Assembly takes a decision in early July, the session could still be held at the end of September or within 90 days, as long as there is a timeline and not simply at the discretion of the Director-General.
125. The **Chairperson** asked whether there was opposition to Rule 5.2 with the amendment by Türkiye.
126. The delegation of **Ethiopia** remarked that 45 days or 60 days was arbitrary as it depended on the matter brought forward to the extraordinary session. Thus, the best wording would be ‘in the latest time possible’, which would allow the Director-General the right to determine a date. This meant that fixing a particular period in terms of days was unnecessary.
127. The delegation of **Palestine** agreed that ‘as soon as possible’ offered a little more flexibility but it also left it open. Another condition was also to set the period as 45 or 60 days, unless logistically not possible. The delegation thus suggested to include both, which would read, ‘set as soon as possible and within 60 days’, and without ‘unless logistically not possible’. In this case, a date is determined as soon as possible and within 60 days.
128. The **Assistant Director-General** summarized that the Chairperson had asked whether there was any opposition to the proposal, ‘as soon as possible’ without mention of any number of days. It was recalled that there was opposition from one State Party in the room so it did not receive consensus. Then there was a question as to whether the Assembly could accept to delete ‘as soon as possible’ and include a date, for which there was also opposition, as no date was preferred. The third option proposed, ‘as soon as possible’ with a proposed duration. The Assistant Director-General appealed to the Assembly to take a decision, noting that the Chairperson sought to hear if there was any opposition to this third version.
129. The **Chairperson** asked what would happen if a timeline were added but the Assembly cannot comply within the time limit set.
130. Following the explanation given by the Assistant Director-General on the options, the delegation of **Azerbaijan** wished to see all the options on the screen, as this would make the task easier. To accommodate the phrase ‘as soon as possible’ with a number of days, it suggested ‘as soon as possible but not later than 60 days’. This would provide a certain flexibility in terms of setting the start of the provisional date and the end, so that it would not take longer than 60 days.
131. The delegation of **Kuwait** sought to move forward, explaining that it had provided some flexibility in its amendment following the proposal by Türkiye and after having listened to the Legal Adviser. It was understood that occasionally a situation arises that is out of the Secretariat’s control. Hence, its amendment ‘unless logistically not possible’, with the addition of a stated number of days (45 or 60 days), which provided the flexibility and accommodated the different positions. The delegation appealed to the States Parties to approve this option and to move forward so as focus on the other important amendments.
132. The delegation of **Hungary** suggested a compromise solution from the 1972 Convention on convening a session, which refers to the Committee but could apply in this case. The rule read, ‘The Director-General shall notify the States Parties about the convocation of the extraordinary session if possible not less than 30 days’. It could thus read ‘not less than 45 days’ or 60 days.
133. The delegation of **Grenada** was open to any solution and would accept the consensus, and it found the proposal ‘as soon as possible and not later than 60 days’ to be a good compromise.
134. The delegation of **Pakistan** agreed with the comments made by Kuwait that no delegation opposed option 2, ‘unless logistically not possible’, which followed the Legal Adviser’s view.
135. The delegation of **Palestine** found the three options to be equivalent with minimal differences between them. It had no problem with any of the options 1, 2 or 3.
136. The **Chairperson** thanked Palestine for its flexibility.
137. The delegation of **Poland** understood that this referred to an extraordinary session and remarked that in other Conventions or statutory bodies of UNESCO it was common to have a shorter period of time for the convocation of a special session. For example, for the Executive Board it is at least 15 days, and for the World Heritage Committee it is 30 days. The delegation understood that some specific time is needed to prepare a meeting but 60 days for an extraordinary session of the General Assembly was too long. The delegation wished to repeat the practice established at the World Heritage Convention and thus ‘not less than 30 days’.
138. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** preferred option 2 [Kuwait’s proposal]. With regard to the suggestion by Poland, it could agree to a new number of days and go along with the consensus. But option 2 best encompassed all the opinions.
139. The delegation of **Lebanon** believed that Hungary’s suggestion to use the codified terms of the 1972 Convention was a good idea, which is option 2, with slightly different terms.
140. The delegation of **Colombia** wished to wrap up the discussion and move forward. It noted that Lebanon found option 2 closest to the 1972 Convention’s wording. The delegation thus wondered whether the Legal Adviser or the Assistant Director-General knew the common practice in other statutory fora or Conventions, as this might help move the discussion forward. It also asked and hoped that Türkiye’s other amendments were not so controversial.
141. The **Legal Adviser** responded to Colombia’s question by confirming that such a provision is not present in any other setting, neither the General Conference nor the Executive Board. He could not recall any case in which there is a requirement that the session be set or scheduled within a certain period of time. What exists is what was mentioned by Poland, which is that the notification be sent 15 or 30 days before the session. The Legal Adviser was willing to suggest wording that would indeed mirror the example of the 1972 Convention.
142. The **Assistant Director-General** further clarified that the 1972 Convention provision relates to the Committee rather than the General Assembly. In the case of assemblies, in no other UNESCO culture Conventions was there a possibility of requesting dates for extraordinary meetings.
143. The delegation of **Lebanon** agreed not to create a provision that does not exist in any other Convention.
144. The delegation of **Ethiopia** remarked that the mention of 45 or 60 days was arbitrary and, thanks to Poland, the Assembly was reminded to take into consideration that extraordinary sessions are called when there is an urgent issue. Hence, Ethiopia’s proposal for ‘as soon as possible’. However, to come to a consensus, Ethiopia withdrew its suggestion.
145. The **Chairperson** thanked Ethiopia for its flexibility.
146. The delegation of **Portugal** suggested to go along with Ethiopia’s amendment as it afforded the Director-General some leeway, while respecting the need for urgency in the convening of an extraordinary session.
147. The **Chairperson** asked whether there was any opposition to Portugal’s proposal.
148. The delegation of **Türkiye** opted for option 2, which provided flexibility to the Director-General if there was not enough time to logistically prepare the meeting. It understood that a timeline does not exist for other Conventions but nor do online sessions exist in other Conventions, as just adopted. The delegation believed that there should be a certain time limit and procedures to follow. It preferred option 2, but it was also flexible with option 1 and option 3.
149. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that the three options were indeed similar and point towards the same objective. Before continuing, he asked Ethiopia whether it had a preference for its own option 4, which was to return to ‘as soon as possible’.
150. The delegation of **Ethiopia** did not wish to present a fourth option, rather it had withdrawn its amendment so that the Assembly can reach a consensus without this phrase.
151. The **Assistant Director-General** noted that Ethiopia was ready to delete ‘as soon as possible’, resulting in the deletion of options 1 and 3, asking whether there were objections to option 2.
152. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections to option 2 [the proposal by Türkiye and Kuwait], which was duly adopted. The amended Rule 5.2 would now read, ‘Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session, which shall then be set within sixty days, unless logistically not possible, following the date of the request referred to in Rule 4.2. The Director-General shall communicate such date to all States Parties and observers.’
153. The delegation of **Türkiye** turned to Rule 7.4 on the provisional agenda to propose an amendment. For the sake of harmonization with the other Conventions, it proposed after ‘as soon as possible’ to insert ‘at least 15 days in advance in case of an extraordinary session’.
154. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the original text on which the Secretariat based its work was the result of one year of work on harmonization. It was recalled that this work [on harmonization] had taken place for all Conventions but that not all Conventions have the same States Parties. The Assistant Director-General noted that it was important to take into account that this is a continuous work in progress and that amendments should not affect the Assembly’s decisions nor the core of the procedures of each Assembly.
155. The **Legal Adviser** looked for the original text, explaining that in a normal session of the Assembly the provisional agenda cites 60 days advance notice in order for States Parties to know about the meeting. In the case of an extraordinary session, precisely because there is no deadline, the Director-General is asked to act as soon as possible. If there is a deadline for the extraordinary session, it would mean that the extraordinary session cannot take place within this timeframe (taking place when the time has elapsed). Thus, the addition of ‘as soon as possible’ aligned with the discussion on the earlier Rule 5.2. This states that if there is a request for an [extraordinary] session then the Director-General is requested to react quickly and organize the session as soon as possible. Returning to the amendment by Türkiye, by adding ‘at least 15 days’ before the session this would mean that the Director-General needs to be more judicious in terms of timing as she cannot go beyond 60 days but needs to count 15 days to allow for the provisional agenda to be sent. There exists a text in which this is required by the Executive Board. It was recalled that the Executive Board met on a special session in May 2022, which had to wait 15 days before it could be convened given the 15 days advance notification required for the session to take place. The amendment by Türkiye would therefore mean that at least 15 days is required for the circulation of the provisional agenda before the extraordinary session can be held. In any event, an extraordinary session would require at least 15 days of preparation. All the provisions cite ‘if possible’, but in this case the Assembly would require 15 days, if it so decided.
156. The delegation of **Türkiye** thanked the Legal Adviser for his explanation and decided to withdraw its amendment. However, in the previous Rule 5.2, the Assembly was told that 45 days would not be enough to convene a General Assembly, thus *how could a General Assembly be convened in one week or two?* Hence, its suggestion to circulate the provisional agenda 15 days prior to the convening of an extraordinary session of the General Assembly. The delegation explained that it had proposed its amendment to align with other provisions in other Conventions and the Executive Board, but it withdrew its proposal.
157. The **Chairperson** thanked Türkiye for its flexibility and asked whether there was consensus on the original wording of Rule 7.4.
158. The delegation of **Palestine** clarified that there was such wording ‘as soon as possible’ in the Rules of Procedure of the 1954 Convention. Indeed, the documents were circulated to the Assembly on the same day as the meeting. As a result, this exercise of amending the Rules of Procedure happened because of this incident. The delegation understood the explanation by the Legal Adviser and the Assistant Director-General, but Türkiye is right on the need to specify a date. It also understood the difficulty that if the provisional agenda is not circulated within 15 days then the Assembly cannot take place. For this reason, the delegation wondered whether it was possible to have, ‘as soon as possible and preferably within 15 days’, thereby stating a duration, rather than having ‘as soon as possible’ open to interpretation.
159. The **Chairperson** asked whether Palestine opposed the language in Rule 7.4.
160. The delegation of **Palestine** preferred to have its version, but it was willing to withdraw its amendment if there was voiced opposition to it.
161. The **Chairperson** asked if there was any opposition to 7.4 as shown onscreen.
162. The **Assistant Director-General** clarifiedthat Rule 7.4 corresponded to Palestine’s amendment, which would read, ‘as soon as possible and preferably within 15 days in the case of an extraordinary session’.
163. The delegation of **Poland** sought clarification from the Legal Adviser on the legality of having the timeframe and ‘as soon as possible and preferably within the 15 days’.
164. The **Legal Adviser** confirmed that it was possible to have this wording with a timeframe.
165. The **Chairperson** asked again whether there was opposition to the language of Rule 7.4.
166. The **Legal Adviser** clarified Palestine’s amendment, given that it is at least 60 days before the opening of an ordinary session, believing that it wished to say, ‘as soon as possible and preferably 15 days before the opening of an extraordinary session’, rather than within 15 days.
167. The **Chairperson** noted a consensus to the reformulated Rule 7.4, which was duly adopted.
168. The delegation of **Palestine** had an intervention in Rule 11.2. on the term of office of the Bureau. It was noted that in some other Conventions, the mandate of the Bureau endured for a period of two years during the intersession. In this case, the Bureau exists only for the duration of the session. The delegation did not wish to open the discussion, as there was a consensus on the current text, but it wished to include this observation in the oral report. The suggestion was to harmonize this point with the other Conventions. It was also a practical issue in that should a situation arise [between sessions], the Bureau could deal with the issue at hand during its two-year mandate. Under the current Rule, the Bureau does not exist between sessions. The Assembly should consider this in future amendments of the Rules of Procedure.
169. The **Chairperson** took note of Palestine’s intervention. Having already adopted the previous four paragraphs, she proceeded to the adoption of paragraph 5 of draft decision, which would read, ‘Approves the revisions to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly as described in Annex I of the present resolution, which take into account the Model Rules of Procedure for the assemblies of the Parties to UNESCO’s culture conventions’. With no comments or objections, paragraph 5 was adopted. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 12 adopted.**

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

**ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. The **Chairperson** returned to item 7, informing the Assembly that the informal consultation group had been successful in finding consensus and that the text for paragraph 7 bis was ready, which would read, ‘Recommends the Committee to be mindful of the domicile of accredited NGOs, when electing members of the Evaluation Body, taking into account the discussion of the ninth session of the General Assembly, especially regarding accredited NGOs domiciled in States non Party and bearing in mind that the expertise of the NGOs shall be appreciated in light of the diversity of the criteria’. The Chairperson thanked the Vice-Chairs, Ethiopia and Japan, and asked whether there was any opposition to paragraph 7 bis.
2. The delegation of **China** had participated in this working group and wished to clarify the understanding of the text, especially the last sentence, ‘diversity of criteria’, that had been proposed by France.
3. The delegation of **France** explained that this referred to all the criteria contained in the texts, which includes domiciliation but not exclusively. It referred to criteria under which the Committee considers that an NGO can make a valuable contribution to the work of the Evaluation Body, including its field of expertise, the geographical area in which it operates, etc.
4. The **Chairperson** thanked France for the clarification and proceeded to the adoption of the text. With no objections, paragraph 7 bis was duly adopted. She then turned to the suspended paragraph 4, which was adopted. Turning to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 7 adopted**.
5. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Oike, who chaired the informal group. It noted the many viewpoints on the question of NGOs non-Party to the Convention and, following the discussions and negotiations, a paragraph had been successfully drafted and adopted. To take into account the discussion, the delegation asked that the different views and positions expressed on this issue, not only concerning the election but also concerning the accreditation of NGOs from States non-Party to the Convention, be reflected in the oral report. The delegation thanked the Chairperson, all the delegations, the Legal Adviser, the Assistant Director-General and the entire Secretariat for their patience.

**ITEM 13 OF THE AGENDA:**

**PROPOSAL FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION IN 2023**

**Document:** [*LHE/22/9.GA/13*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-9.GA-13_EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*9.GA 13*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/13)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 13 and the proposal for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 Convention, an important turning point in the life of this Convention. The celebration will be an opportunity for stakeholders to take stock of the past achievements and reflect on the Convention’s future direction. It will also be a chance to further raise awareness of the significance of living heritage. The Secretariat’s plan involved a global campaign throughout 2023 to celebrate the anniversary, with a series of activities to showcase the diversity and wealth of living heritage. It was also proposed that the anniversary celebrations focus on the changes that the implementation of the 2003 Convention had brought to the safeguarding of living heritage at the local, national and international levels. At the same time, States Parties may be encouraged to organize national and community level events and activities to promote the objectives of the Convention. In this regard, the working documents proposed three main objectives as guidelines to frame the celebration. The Assistant Director-General remarked that many delegations had participated in the celebrations for the 1972 Convention and the idea was to already start thinking of finding the best ways to integrate living heritage in public policies in every country, while ensuring greater visibility for the Convention.
3. The **Chairperson** looked forward to celebrating the achievements of the Convention, opening the floor for comments.
4. The delegation of **Indonesia** congratulated the Chairperson on her effective management of the session. It expressed keen interest to be part of the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023. As the home of currently more than 11,000 elements of intangible cultural heritage and more than 1,500 intangible cultural heritage registered at the national level it is particularly important for Indonesia to incorporate its rich and diverse living heritage as a mainstream of creativity in the achievement of the SDGs. This is very much in line with the current Indonesian G20 presidency [with a series of events under the theme] ‘Culture for Sustainable Living’. Indonesia’s presidency is crafting a proposition for culture as a foundation for greater resilience and a more sustainable social, economic and environmental future. Playing a part in the celebrations for the twentieth anniversary, Indonesia would also like to be part of the global effort on how intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development can best be understood so that its contributions can be recognized and fully realized. It believed that by identifying the linkages between the various clusters of intangible cultural heritage and its corresponding SDGs would raise awareness on intangible cultural heritage, helping towards achieving the SDGs. The delegation was ready to collaborate with the Secretariat, State Parties and other stakeholders to join the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary.
5. The delegation of **Philippines** offered its advance felicitations on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. Two decades after its adoption, the Convention has almost reached universal ratification with a total of 180 States Parties. The Philippines encouraged other Member States to ratify the Convention, which had firmly established the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at the international level, becoming a clear reference for the Philippines and other States Parties in formulating public policies, while recognizing the central role of the communities, groups and individuals concerned. The Philippines shall take part in this momentous occasion by organizing national and community level events and activities to promote the objectives of the Convention through the translation of the Convention into local languages, capacity-building support, spreading digital methodologies for safeguarding, and balancing economic development with heritage protection, as well as activities that highlight the importance of consent in the decisions concerning communities and their heritage.
6. The delegation of **Brazil** agreedthatthe Convention is one of the most remarkable achievements for all States Parties. Brazil was proud to have played an active part in the first negotiations that gave rise to the Convention. In 2023, at the national level, Brazil will celebrate its 23rd anniversary of its national programme for the safeguarding of intangible heritage. This reflects the historical awareness of Brazilian society regarding living heritage; this myriad of cultural traditions and manifestations that confers unity and identity to its multi-ethnic society. As an example of actions, its National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage just signed a technical cooperation agreement with the Brazilian Tourism Promotion Agency aimed at the promotion and dissemination of Brazilian cultural elements inscribed on the Representative List and on the World Heritage List. This greatly contributes to the various dimensions of sustainability among the communities and related social groups, resulting in the strengthening of actions to safeguard these cultural elements. Brazil’s strategy for promoting intangible heritage echoes, to a large extent, the Secretariat’s suggestions for celebrating 20 years of the Convention. It was actively working on awareness-raising campaigns and the integration of Brazilian cultural manifestations in the virtual world. In this perspective, it considered youth and indigenous populations in its campaign. For these reasons, the delegation welcomed and fully supported the Secretariat in its celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention. Brazil was pleased to contribute with its expertise both at national and international events.
7. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** expressed sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for organizing this important meeting. It also appreciated the outstanding work of the working group chaired by Ambassador Oike on the revision of the Operational Directives. It noted that 180 countries had joined the Convention to date and it was encouraging to see each State Party’s commitment to the Convention, especially with regard to safeguarding measures, which range from inventories to applying the legal framework. Regarding the twentieth anniversary, the Korean Government planned to organize a special forum under the theme, ‘Reflection on the 20-year history of the 2003 Convention’. This forum is an annual event called the ‘World Forum for Intangible Cultural Heritage’, jointly hosted by ROK National Intangible Heritage Center and ICHCAP. The forum invites various stakeholders, such as communities, practitioners, researchers, experts and policy-makers, to share their achievements and implementation of the Convention and to discuss the direction. The delegation congratulated all the newly elected Committee Members on their election and hoped to closely cooperate with other Members in the implementation of this Convention.
8. The delegation of **Latvia** looked forward to the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023 and to implement the Convention for the future of intangible cultural heritage around the world. It expressed its appreciation of all the planning work for the celebration at the international level, especially welcoming the idea of the global awareness-raising campaign and the mobilization of youth. The delegation was happy to announce that the anniversary of the Convention coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Latvian song and dance celebration, which is part of the multinational element of the ‘Baltic song and dance celebrations’ inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List [in 2008]. The delegation welcomed the delegates to visit Latvia from 30 June to 9 July to experience its living song and dance heritage, which still plays an important role in Latvian national identity. Latvia supported the idea of publishing a list of celebratory events and activities on the Living Heritage Entity website and was pleased to provide information, along with a proposal for Latvian song and dance celebrations, as part of the celebratory events.
9. The delegation of **China** expressed gratitude to the Convention for having achieved so much in the past 20 years with China having benefitted enormously from implementing this Convention to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. It wished for everybody to join this very important celebratory occasion.
10. The delegation of **Mongolia** welcomed the Secretariat’s initiative to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, adding that it planned to celebrate it at the national and regional level. It wished to organize the opening of the year and close the anniversary during the eighteenth session of the Committee [of the Convention]. The delegation asked the Secretariat about the possibility of declaring an International Year of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, particularly promoting traditional knowledge, by the United Nations.
11. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** thanked the Chairperson for her excellent management of the Assembly’s work as well as the Assistant Director-General and the entire Secretariat for their hard work. It also thanked the Ambassador of Japan for chairing the working group and all the States Parties who participated in this work, as well as all the official delegations present. The Assembly concluded its work with the hope that the anniversary of the Convention in 2023 will be an extraordinary moment of celebration of the achievements by local communities, bearers and practitioners of living heritage for all the cultural traditions in our countries. The Syrian Arab Republic was honoured to announce its commitment to the anniversary through the organization of activities throughout the year. For this twentieth anniversary, it shared its wish to partner with the Secretariat, UNESCO and the Culture Sector, as well as any Member State that wished to join Syria at the regional level to celebrate this major event. It asked that this announcement be official and included in the summary records of the General Assembly.
12. The delegation of **Barbados** was happy to join colleagues in celebrating 20 years of the Convention in 2023. This would also be 15 years since Barbados signed the Convention, so there was double reason to celebrate. It also recognized the significant vulnerabilities experienced in the region and it was particularly inspired by Haiti’s actions this session in terms of its resilience in the use of Joumou soup. The delegation recognized that alignments and the ability to use the Convention and intangible cultural heritage as a mode of resilience is important to Barbados. It will continue to align the Convention with other significant movements and in so doing recognize SDG 13 on climate action, which is important to the region in terms of its vulnerabilities. Barbados will therefore continue to use intangible cultural heritage in its celebrations as a mode of resilience for positive climate action.
13. The delegation of **Kuwait** was happy to have the country’s first accredited NGO, which gives reason to celebrate, thanking those at home for this accomplishment and who made it a reality. Since this session is the last one for Kuwait as a Member of the Committee, the delegation thanked everyone for the honour of the last four years, for their efforts and quality decisions in safeguarding intangible heritage for future generations. Kuwait was fully engaged in the work of the Committee, always focusing on results and effectiveness by searching and finding solutions with diplomacy. The coordination skills and professionalism of the Members of the Committee resulted in effective teamwork, with a positive impact on the results. During its four-year term, Kuwait was fully involved in its mission. It actively participated in working groups and on maintaining the integrity of the Convention and the Evaluation Body. Although it leaves the Committee, Kuwait remained committed to the Convention and its noble mission and mandate, wishing the best for the Committee and the next General Assembly.
14. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** welcomed the upcoming celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and, as a newly elected Committee Member, thanked all who had supported its candidacy, especially Electoral Group V(a). The delegation assured the Assembly of its intention to share its experience and, above all, to learn from the experience of the rest of the world in line with the promotion and implementation of the Convention. The delegation congratulated the outgoing Members, adding that it wished to benefit from their experience, in particular, through the Open-ended working group. It thanked the Secretariat and its team, as well as the Assistant Director-General for his support and availability.
15. The **Chairperson** moved to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 9.GA 13 adopted**.

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA:**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. The **Chairperson** invited States Parties to present any issues it wished to discuss.
2. The delegation of **Mexico** returned to item 7 and paragraph 4 in which there was a wrong number stated in the decision, noting 32 accredited NGOs when an additional NGO had to be added from the amended paragraph 5.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked Mexico for bringing up this point, which would be dealt by the Secretariat. With no more requests for the floor, she turned to item 15.

**ITEM 15 OF THE AGENDA:**

**CLOSURE**

1. The **Chairperson** noted that the work of the General Assembly had come to an end following three days of hard work, in which it had accomplished the important task of laying down a solid foundation for the future of the Convention. She thanked the States Parties for their active cooperation in the spirit of consensus and solidarity. Highlighting some key achievements, the General Assembly elected 12 new Members to the Committee. She wished the new Members every success and also thanked the outgoing Members for their essential contribution to the Convention. The Assembly also approved the plan for the use of resources of the Fund, allowing the Convention to strengthen its monitoring of International Assistance projects. The proposed revisions to the Operational Directives related to the global reflection on the listing mechanisms were also approved, with a special note of appreciation to the Open-ended working group. The revisions of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly had also been approved, contributing to the harmonization of the procedures of the governing bodies of the culture Conventions. After lengthy debate, the Assembly accredited 33 NGOs. The Convention was now able to draw on the expertise of many NGOs to advise on a range of issues and she warmly congratulated them. The Assembly had also demonstrated its full support and solidarity with Haiti with its inscription of Joumou soup on the Representative List.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** thanked all the delegates and ambassadors for their attention during this meeting and for accompanying him in this extraordinary experience. He thanked the Chairperson for her openness to dialogue and the search for consensus among the States Parties, reflecting the spirit of the Convention. The Assistant Director-General was sure that the celebrations in 2023 will fully live up to expectations with her support. He concluded by asking for a round of applause for the Secretariat, who work all year to achieve extraordinary things.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his inspiring words. Due to the time, she regretted that she was unable to invite States Parties to say their last words. She concluded by thanking the Bureau members for the great privilege of their valuable support. She thanked the Secretariat for its efficiency and excellent support [applause], and she warmly thanked the interpreters, translators and technicians for the smooth running of the Assembly’s [applause]. The Chairperson declared the ninth session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage closed.

*[Close of the ninth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties]*

1. Read more about the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/mondiacult2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The video and audio recordings of all the sessions can be found on the Convention website: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/9ga> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Consult the Global Network of Facilitators [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/operational-principles-and-modalities-in-emergencies-01143> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region: <https://www.unesco-ichcap.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See: <https://www.ichlinks.com/index.do> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Khiva Process: Promotion of international cooperation in Central Asia*,* initiated by Uzbekistan, was adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 212nd Session. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Read more about the project [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/assistances/-proud-of-my-heritage-transmission-and-safeguarding-of-the-intangible-cultural-heritage-in-grenada-through-inventorying-and-education-initiatives-01627). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This UNESCO publication is available [here](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377671.locale=en). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Read more about the project [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/assistances/community-based-inventory-documenting-and-safeguarding-folklore-of-the-syunik-region-of-armenia-01864). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shadow play was inscribed in 2018 on the Urgent Safeguarding List. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. More information on Living Heritage and the COVID-19 pandemic and building back better can be found [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/living-heritage-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-01179). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Read more about requesting International Assistance and the Toolkit [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/requesting-assistance-00039). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See the list of Category 2 centres [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/category2). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Read more about the MOOC course and to join the course [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/massive-online-open-course-mooc-01228): [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See list of global network facilitators [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Consult the constellation of Dive into Heritage! [here](https://ich.unesco.org/dive/). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Read more about the LIVIND project [here](https://ndpculture.org/projects/livind-creative-and-living-cultural-heritage-as-a-resource-for-the-northern-dimension-region/). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Read more about European Heritage Days [here](https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/Shared-Theme/Living-Heritage-2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Read more about the work of the Comité du patrimoine ethnologique et immatériel [here](https://www.culture.gouv.fr/en/Thematiques/Ethnologie-de-la-France/Qu-est-ce-que-l-ethnologie-de-la-France-et-du-patrimoine). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe: <https://www.unesco-centerbg.org/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Read more about the Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage: Resources for Teachers programme [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/resources-for-teachers-01180). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Read more about UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/unitwin/about). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Read more about the project [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/joint-capacity-building-project-on-ich-and-disaster-risk-reduction-kicks-off-in-the-philippines-and-honduras-13318). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Read more about the International Centre for Capacity Building in Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Arab States [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/a-new-unesco-category-2-centre-in-the-field-of-intangible-cultural-heritage-in-the-arab-states-13362). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Read more about the Revive the Spirit of Mosul’ initiative [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/revive-mosul#:~:text=Reviving%20Mosul%20is%20not%20only,city%20through%20culture%20and%20education.). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL): <https://crespial.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. There are currently over 80 UNESCO Chairs working in the culture sector. Consult the list [here](https://en.unesco.org/creativity/partnerships/chairs). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Read more and download the publication [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/heritage-alive-news/traditional-musical-instruments-sharing-experiences-field/). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Read more about the Living Heritage for Peace: the Social Media Initiative [here](https://www.ichngoforum.org/news/living-heritage-peace-social-media-initiative/). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Consult the report on the Recommendations of the working group: [Part I and II](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM_WG-Recommandations_EN.docx), and [Part III](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_WG-Recommendations_EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See the correspondence and additional information [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accreditation-of-ngos-01257). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. There are fifteen Member States that comprise the Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Art.17.3: In cases of extreme urgency – the objective criteria of which shall be approved by the General Assembly upon the proposal of the Committee – the Committee may inscribe an item of the heritage concerned on the List mentioned in paragraph 1, in consultation with the State Party concerned. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Criterion R.2: Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Criterion P.9: The programme, project or activity is primarily applicable to the particular needs of developing countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Consult the Recommendations from the working group meeting (Part III) [here](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM_WG-Recommendations_EN.docx). Recommendations from the working group (Part I and II) can be consulted [here](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-21-16.COM_WG-Recommandations_EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Download the full report on the Evaluation of UNESCO’s Action in the Framework of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage [here](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380015/PDF/380015eng.pdf.multi). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Read more about this Massive Open Online Course [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/massive-online-open-course-mooc-01228). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The dedicated website of the UN Ocean Decade: <https://www.oceandecade.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The dedicated website on the International Decade of Indigenous Languages: <https://en.unesco.org/idil2022-2032> [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See the documents of the Working Group on Governance from the 38th session of the General Conference [here](http://wayback.archive-it.org/10611/20181129023320/https:/en.unesco.org/generalconference/workinggroupongovernance). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See the documents of the Working Group on Governance from the 39th session of the General Conference [here](https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/workinggroupongovernance39th). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The draft Model Rules of Procedure are annexed to document [41 C/55](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379755_eng/PDF/379755eng.pdf.multi). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See the UN Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Language [here](https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The terminology comes from the modalities that were agreed by the Executive Board for a possible online meeting of the General Conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)