

Recent developments under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

February 2025



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Intangible Heritage
Convention

Overview

In this joint presentation, the following topics will be covered:

- 1. The global capacity building programme and its reorientation**
- 2. Safeguarding living heritage in formal and non-formal education**
- 3. Periodic reporting**
- 4. International Assistance**
- 5. Global reflection on the listing mechanisms**
- 6. Twentieth session of the Intergovernmental Committee**
- 7. Reflection on a broader implementation of the Article 18**
- 8. Thematic initiatives and other programmes**



The Convention today - A strong network

- **184** States Parties
- **264** accredited NGOs and NGO Forum
- **248** members in the global network of facilitators
- **19** UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks
- **8** Category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO



Achievements and future directions

- A broadened concept of cultural heritage
- Connecting communities and safeguarding practices across the globe
- Living heritage as a response to sustainable development challenges
- Embed the capacity building in sector wide projects for holistic cultural policies
- Strong outcome documents of international conferences guiding the way forward





MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration

- Calls for holistic cultural policies for sustainable development
- Affirms culture as a global public good
- Calls for the integration of culture as a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 international development agenda



The Seoul Vision

- Takes stock of 20 years of implementation of the Convention
- Presents concrete actions to unleash the power of living heritage for sustainable development and peace



“The Spirit of Naples” call for action

- Discussed synergies between the 1972 Convention and the 2003 Convention
- 11 key actions to ensure a more human-centered and integrated heritage safeguarding approach

19.COM Key outcomes

- 65 inscriptions on the Lists (16 multinational files involving 62 States Parties)
- The '**Connecting dimensions**' of living heritage were highlighted
- **100% submission rate** of periodic reporting of the States Parties in Africa
- Progress on the thematic initiatives



Global capacity-building programme

Ongoing reorientation:

- Benefitting +140 Member States
- From supporting core actions through individual workshops to including thematic and **comprehensive capacity building approaches**
- Expansion of the facilitators' network since 2022
- A learning platform for multi-modal delivery, starting with a MOOC

Global capacity-building programme

Priority actions:

- Multimodal delivery formats and learning platform
- Thematic expansion
- Strengthening the facilitators network to contribute to thematic areas and changing demands

Safeguarding living heritage in formal and non-formal education

- An **intersectoral initiative** since 2017, second funding priority of the Convention
- Strategic advantages for culture and education: promoting a **broader approach** to safeguarding that connects schools and communities and strengthens educational relevance (SDG 4.7)
- Closing the quadrennial cycle in 2025



Integrating

living heritage
safeguarding into formal
and non-formal education

- Approaches developed through activities in more than 80 countries
- Resource group of 40 facilitators trained
- Knowledge generated on education-related indicators of the Overall results framework for the Convention (expert meeting)
- Resources and tools developed: Clearinghouse, Resource kit for teachers, Online course: Bringing heritage to the classroom



Anchoring

living heritage
safeguarding in education
systems, policies and
learning spaces

- Integrating living heritage in international frameworks and standard-setting instruments and their guidance tools: Culture and Arts Education Framework, Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development
- New generation of projects that combines inter-ministerial collaboration at all levels with community-based approaches
- Tools for assessing the outcomes of learning with living heritage
- Online course on Living heritage and education to reach out to a wider group of stakeholders and actors in this field (forthcoming)





Periodic reporting: moving towards the global single submission system



- The periodic reporting mechanism is a **key planning and monitoring tool**, aligned with the Convention's Overall Results Framework
- The **ongoing first regional cycle** of periodic reporting has shown positive results, including high submission rates
- Periodic reports submitted by States Parties in **Asia and the Pacific** will be examined by the twentieth session of the Committee in December 2025
- **Reflection year** in 2026: assess lessons learnt and address potential shortcomings
- Single global submission date system: **30 June 2027 and every four years thereafter** for all States Parties.

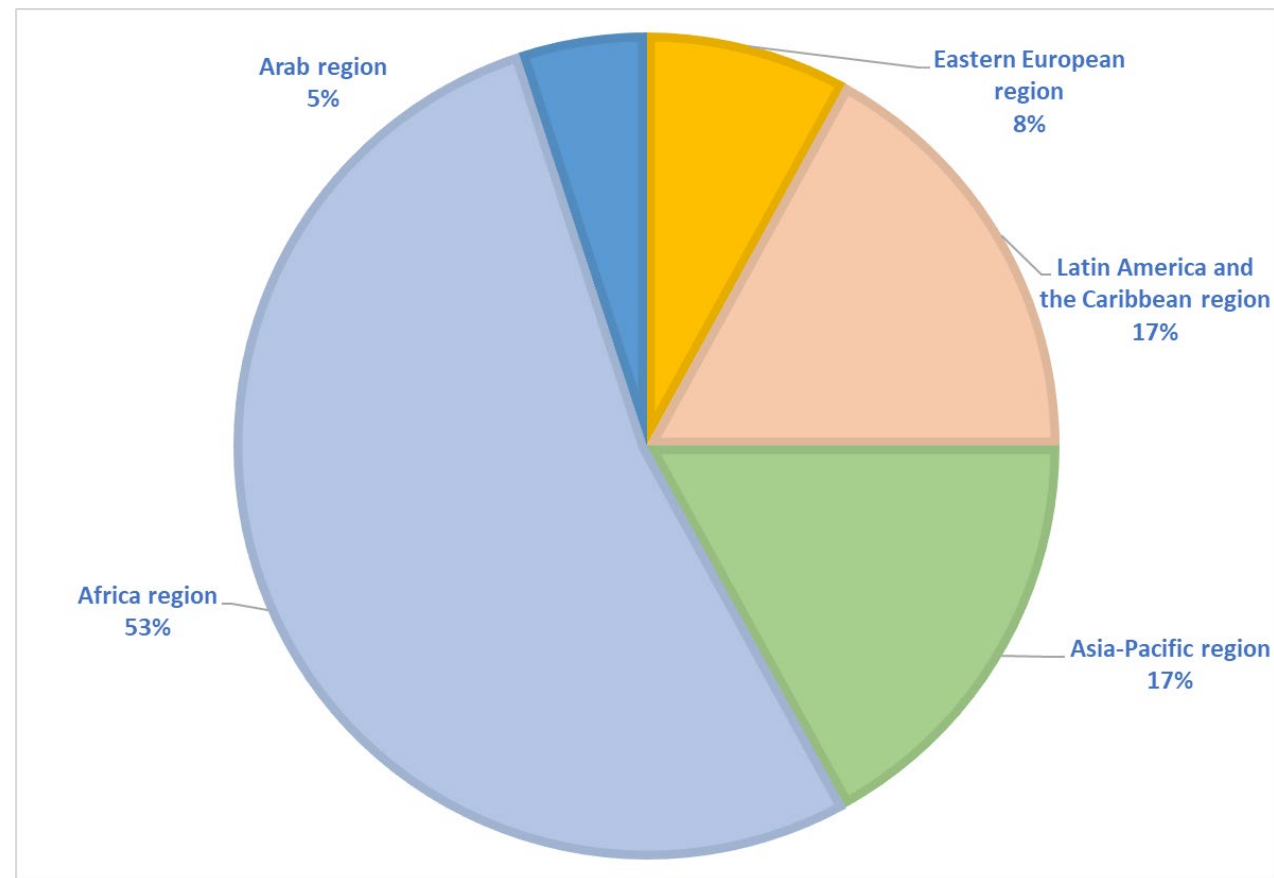
International Assistance

- Creation of the **International Assistance mechanism** in 2008
- Establishment of a **dedicated team** in the Secretariat in 2018
- Requests **up to US\$ 100,000** can be submitted **at any time**
- States Parties may request **technical assistance**: this takes place in the form of the provision of experts to assist them in developing or revising their requests
- Implementation of the '**Strategy for the monitoring and evaluation of International Assistance projects**'



Key achievements

- **82 States parties** benefitted from International Assistance
- More than **150 projects** funded
- More than **USD 13.5 million** granted





Follow-up to the global reflection on the listing mechanisms

Ongoing reorientation:

- New and improved procedures to make the **listing mechanisms dynamic** and bring the **voice of communities** to the forefront
- **Simplified forms** for more accessibility
- Encouraged use of **technology**
- **Synergy** with other cooperation mechanisms

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Twentieth session of the
Intergovernmental
Committee

- **8 to 13 December 2025 in New Delhi, India**
- Registration to start in September 2025
- Agenda to be published in September 2025
- Information and exchange meeting (16 October 2025 – webcast)
- Working documents to be available on 20.COM webpage from 10 November 2025



A broader implementation of the **Article 18** of the 2003 Convention

“The Committee shall periodically select and promote national, subregional and regional programmes, **projects** and activities for the **safeguarding** of the heritage which it considers best **reflect the principles and objectives** of this Convention.”

A broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention

- Article 18 has the potential to fully reflect the purposes of the 2003 Convention
- **An online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences**
- Communities at the centre sharing their needs and methodologies, promoting mutual learning and inspiring each other





Thematic initiatives

In line with the Operational Directives (Chapter VI) and the Committee's decisions underlining the importance of highlighting the contributions of living heritage to **sustainable development**, the Secretariat has been developing since 2021 the following thematic initiatives:

- Economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding
- Cultural heritage and climate change
- Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts



Economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding



Guidance note on the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding under the 2003 Convention

- Provides **overarching principles** in line with the Convention and its ethical frameworks
- Addresses the importance of developing **heritage-sensitive approaches** that are **flexible and rights-based**;
- Calls for safeguarding measures with market engagement contexts tailored to the **specific needs and contexts** of the communities concerned, as well as to their living heritage.

Climate action for living heritage



Guidance note on climate action for living heritage

Proposes a comprehensive, **rights-based and people-centered** approach to climate action for living heritage through three key goals:

- Promote and enhance the positive role of living heritage in **climate change adaptation**
- Promote and enhance the positive role of living heritage in **climate change mitigation**
- Improve measures for **safeguarding living heritage** in the climate emergency

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts



Guidance note to be developed in two expert meetings (June / September 2025) and brought to 20.COM (December 2025)

- Will address the phenomenon of **increasing urbanization**, to ensure cities can facilitate transmission of living heritage
- Focus on key issues, challenges and opportunities related to safeguarding living heritage in urban contexts from planning perspectives

Other initiatives: Foodways as living heritage



- **Foodways** are a defining marker of cultural identities. They constitute an important part of the intangible heritage of communities everywhere in the world.
- 50 foodways-related inscriptions on the Lists of the Convention from 54 countries. In addition, 153 elements from 96 countries have linkages to foodways.
- One new initiative is the “**International Food Atlas**” (inception phase completed):
 - **Capacity-building** and **knowledge sharing** activities to take place in **16 countries** in 2025-26
 - **Digital platform** on foodways under development as a thematic focus within the platform on sharing good safeguarding experiences (Article 18 platform)

Thank you



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