



United Nations
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Organisation
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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Diversity of cultural expressions

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CE/09/3.IGC/211/4
Paris, 9 October 2009
Original: French

Distribution limited

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Third ordinary session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
7-11 December 2009

Item 4 of the provisional agenda: Strategy for encouraging ratifications of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In Decision 2.EXT.IGC 7, adopted at its second extraordinary session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to submit to it a strategy for encouraging ratifications of the Convention, especially in under-represented regions and subregions. This document proposes a medium-term strategy (2010-2013) involving all the Convention's stakeholders, together with an action plan, which the Committee may wish to use as a basis for its discussions.

Decision required: paragraph 11.

1. At its second extraordinary session, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Committee”) requested the Secretariat to submit to it a strategy encouraging ratifications, especially in under-represented regions and subregions, of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Convention”) (Decision 2.EXT.IGC 7). Furthermore, at its second ordinary session (June 2009), the Conference of Parties invited States Parties to continue and intensify their efforts with a view to achieving broader ratification of the Convention (Resolution 2.CP 7).

2. The Convention, adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference at its 33rd session in October 2005, entered into force in March 2007. As of 9 October 2009, there were 104 Parties to the Convention: 103 States and the European Community as a regional economic integration organization. The visibility and universal scope of the Convention mean that it should be ratified as soon as possible by a high number of Member States of UNESCO, so that it may achieve quasi-universality, as has the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972. There is however an imbalance in geographical distribution, which must be reduced significantly. Information document (CE/09/3.IGC/211/INF.3A), dated 9 October 2009, sets out the status of ratifications and shows that the imbalance chiefly concerns the following subregions and regions: Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States.

3. In order to maintain the momentum of ratification and improve geographical balance, the strategy for encouraging ratifications should target decision-makers and opinion leaders. It should also include all Convention’s stakeholders – the organs of the Convention, Parties to the Convention, civil society and UNESCO.

4. The strategy for encouraging ratifications thus involves an approach aimed at rectifying the geographical imbalance, using information and communication tools that must be available in national languages, and involving all stakeholders. It could vary according to region, subregion and language, on the basis of the list of States not party to the Convention. UNESCO Field offices should be involved. In this connection, the Secretariat prepared the above-mentioned information document (CE/09/3.IGC/211/INF.3A) which lists, by region and by UNESCO electoral group, Parties and States not party to the Convention, the Field offices concerned and intergovernmental organizations for which awareness-raising could be relevant.

5. Encouraging ratification also implies using and disseminating information and communication tools in several languages. It should be recalled that in 2006 the Secretariat produced a bilingual information kit (English and French) which included the text of the Convention and two brochures. The first, entitled “Ten keys to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” was intended to facilitate understanding of the Convention. The second, entitled “30 frequently asked questions concerning the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”, answered questions that are usually raised after the adoption of the standard-setting instrument. The two brochures have been very successful and are available in various languages.¹ Since 2007, the information kit, in English and French, has been available for download from the Convention’s website, at the following address: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/diversity/convention>. The field offices also have

¹ “Ten keys to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”: Albanian, Arabic, English, French, Khmer, Portuguese, Spanish. “30 frequently asked questions concerning the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”: Albanian, Arabic, English, French, Khmer. Moreover, the model instrument of ratification is available in the following languages: Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

PowerPoint presentations² on the Convention which are regularly updated and highly appreciated, but stakeholders could undertake to produce new tools.

6. As regards awareness-raising, seizing opportunities provided by intergovernmental organizations could be considered. To that end, the Secretariat has prepared an information document (CE/09/3.IGC/211/INF.3B) with the aim of enabling all Convention's stakeholders to identify international fora where they might conduct awareness-raising activities. The information that has been compiled for information purposes clearly shows that many Member States of UNESCO belong to several organizations where they could intervene by providing them, where appropriate, a set of documents comprising the information kit, a presentation explaining the importance of the Convention, and a model instrument of ratification. Raising the awareness of intergovernmental organizations is thus consistent with Article 21 of the Convention, which states that Parties undertake to promote its objectives and principles in other international forums.

7. Over the next four years (2010-2013), the emphasis would be on:

- (1) priority activities in the under-represented subregions and regions, namely Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States;
- (2) providing the Convention's stakeholders (Parties, civil society, UNESCO) information material, in addition to the text of the Convention in the six working languages of the Convention and Portuguese;
- (3) encouraging States Parties and those not party to the Convention to translate the text of the Convention into their national languages and other languages so as to facilitate the ratification process;
- (4) efforts of the Parties which will endeavour also to enrich the content of the material available by developing presentations showing how their policies enable improved recognition of their cultural expressions and illustrating the benefits they draw from them. This material will be posted on the Convention's website.

8. Specifically,

- (1) under Major Programme IV of the budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5) which foresees 15 new ratifications, in the hope that the actual number will exceed the expected results, UNESCO's Field offices will be called upon to arrange awareness-raising activities (meetings and/or development of new information tools), funded under the regular budget, in Member States in cooperation with their civil society.
- (2) In addition, the Parties might, in collaboration with their National Commissions and the focal points for information-sharing, identify measures encouraging ratifications at the regional level, for instance at meetings bringing together ministers of culture or in intergovernmental and regional organizations to which they belong as well as in international fora such as world forums.
- (3) Furthermore, civil society organizations active in the fields of the Convention will be called upon to continue and expand activities in under-represented subregions and regions so as to facilitate understanding of the Convention and highlight the importance of ratifying it while emphasizing its benefits.

9. This kind of strategy encouraging ratifications should be complemented by the active involvement of the Convention's organs. With regard to the Committee, several avenues may be envisaged:

² The presentations are available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

- (1) It might wish to invite to its sessions intergovernmental organizations that do not yet participate as observers in the Committee's work (see list of those who take part in annex hereto).
- (2) The Committee might also wish to ask the Secretariat to submit to it a progress report on the strategy at its fourth ordinary session (December 2010).
- (3) The Committee might, finally, organize a thematic debate at the fourth session of the Conference of Parties (2013) to which would be invited, in particular, the States that have not yet ratified the Convention and during which the Parties could present their experiences since the ratification and the benefits they have derived from it.

10. As part of the ratification strategy (2010-2013), the following action plan to mobilize and coordinate the actions of the Parties to the Convention, civil society and UNESCO is proposed:

The Parties will:

- define at the national, subregional and regional levels, together with their National Commissions and focal points for sharing information about the Convention, measures designed to encourage ratifications at the subregional and regional levels;
- promote the benefits of the Convention in international forums;
- communicate the results of their initiatives to the Secretariat of the Convention.

UNESCO:

- The Director-General will take the necessary steps and resources to ensure coordination between the Culture Sector, including the Secretariat of the Convention, the other Sectors concerned by the strategy and the Field offices so as to create an environment conducive to the implementation of the strategy to encourage ratifications.
- The Culture Sector will establish close and active cooperation between Field offices and the Convention Secretariat, and will, in particular, programme awareness-raising activities in UNESCO Member States that are not party to the Convention, especially in the under-represented subregions and regions.
- The Convention Secretariat, in conjunction with the field offices, will develop new information tools according to the needs identified.
- At mid-term point (2011), on the basis of actions carried out by all stakeholders, the Convention Secretariat will prepare a document on the state of progress of ratifications, the steps taken and the activities carried out (2009-2010) by all the stakeholders, and will transmit the document to the Conference of Parties (2011).

Civil society will:

- pursue and develop activities in the under-represented subregions and regions;
- disseminate its information material and continue its actions of various types (awareness-raising, and so on).

Expected results: by 2013, 35 to 40 additional ratifications, in particular in the under-represented subregions and regions.

11. The Committee might wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 3.IGC 4

The Committee,

1. *Having examined document CE/09/3.IGC/211/4 and the annex thereto,*
2. *Recalling Decision 2.EXT.IGC 7 of the Committee and Resolution 2.CP 7 of the Conference of Parties,*
3. *Taking into account its debates on the matter and recognizing that the implementation of the Convention by the Parties is the best means for promoting it and serves as an incentive for other States to ratify it,*
4. *Welcomes the strategy encouraging ratifications contained in document CE/09/3.IGC/211/4;*
5. *Encourages the Parties, the Secretariat and civil society to intensify their efforts and improve cooperation so that the strategy may be implemented as soon as possible, in a coordinated and consistent manner;*
6. *Requests the Secretariat to submit to it at its next session in December 2010 a document reporting on progress in ratifications of the Convention and on steps taken and actions carried out in 2009-2010;*
7. *Also requests the Secretariat to invite to its next session all the intergovernmental organizations that might have a role in promoting the Convention and the ratification process;*
8. *Invites the Director-General to facilitate implementation of the ratification strategy, in particular in the under-represented subregions and regions, and to encourage Member States of UNESCO to ratify the Convention.*

Annex

List of intergovernmental organizations, other than agencies of the United Nations system, which have already participated or have been invited to participate in sessions of the Committee under Rule 7.3 and Rule 7.4 of its Rules of Procedure

1. Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie (APF)
2. Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
3. International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
4. Council of Europe (CoE)
5. Commonwealth Foundation (CF)
6. Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)
7. Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)
8. International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF)
9. Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
10. Latin Union (LU)