



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Diversity of
Cultural Expressions

14 IGC

DCE/21/14.IGC/15 REV
Paris, 28 January 2021
Original: French

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

Fourteenth session
Online
1 – 6 February 2021

Item 15 of the provisional agenda: Collaboration with civil society to implement the Convention

In accordance with [Decision 9.IGC 9](#), which requests the Secretariat to include on the agenda of each session of the Committee an item on the role of civil society in the implementation of the Convention, this document provides a brief overview of the collaboration between civil society, the Secretariat and the governing bodies of the Convention with civil society. It also provides ideas on how to structure and optimize this collaboration.

Decision required: paragraph 19

I. Reminder of the provisions of the Convention, its Operational Guidelines and the Resolutions and Decisions of the governing bodies of the Convention.

1. In accordance with Article 11 of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Convention”), Parties acknowledge the fundamental role of civil society in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions. The operational guidelines relating to this Article, on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”, were approved by the Conference of Parties at its second session ([Resolution 2.CP 7](#)) and define civil society, for the purposes of the Convention, as “non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, professionals in the culture sector and associated sectors, and groups that support the work of artists and cultural communities”. The same guidelines define the modalities for the contribution of civil society to the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the one hand, and to the work of its governing bodies on the other.
2. In addition, the Conference of Parties and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Committee”) have, through their respective Resolutions and Decisions, provided additional guidance on the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention, its monitoring and governance at the international level. At its ninth session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to organize a working session between civil society representatives and the Bureau prior to the meetings of the governing bodies to address, *inter alia*, specific issues of importance to civil society. In the same decision, the Committee also requested the Secretariat to include on the agenda of each of its sessions an item on the role of civil society in the implementation of the Convention, in the framework of which it invited civil society to present an activity report (in writing and/or orally) ([Decision 9.IGC 9](#)).
3. At its tenth session, the Committee invited Parties, the Secretariat and civil society organizations to continue developing mechanisms to strengthen the participation of civil society organizations in the implementation of the Convention, in particular through the organization of a biennial forum prior to the sessions of the Conference of Parties ([Decision 10.IGC 6](#)). The Civil Society Forum (hereinafter “the Forum”) provides an interactive framework, with an adaptable agenda, to enable coordination among the various representatives of civil society and with the Convention’s other stakeholders. The Forum’s first edition took place on 12 June 2017 and the second on 3 June 2019. The Committee took note of the conclusions of the second edition of the Forum at its thirteenth session ([Decision 13.IGC 10](#))¹.
4. In the same decision, the Committee requested the Secretariat to continue its efforts to encourage networking among the Convention’s stakeholders, in particular civil society organizations, UNESCO Chairs, and Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO, in order to strengthen their capacities through the transfer of expertise, sharing of knowledge, and pooling of resources. In addition, the Committee invited Parties to establish mechanisms to create an enabling environment for civil society to participate in the implementation of the Convention, and to provide financial and logistical resources to support the sustainability of the activities carried out by civil society organizations, on the one hand, and the participation of their representatives in the statutory meetings of the Convention, on the other.
5. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”, the role of civil society in the implementation of the Convention includes:
 - (a) relaying the concerns of citizens, associations and enterprises to public authorities;
 - (b) monitoring the implementation of policies and programmes;
 - (c) acting as a watchdog to uphold cultural values and innovation;

1. The report is available in information document [DCE/20/13.IGC/INF.6](#).

- (d) contributing to the achievement of greater transparency and accountability in the governance of culture.

II. Contribution of civil society to the implementation of the Convention

6. By ratifying the Convention, Parties undertake to encourage the active participation of civil society in the achievement of its objectives (under Article 11) and to strengthen their bilateral, regional and international cooperation with a view to enhancing partnerships with and among civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to foster and promote the diversity of cultural expressions (under Article 12). UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5 and 40 C/5) reflects this commitment by using the level of civil society stakeholders' engagement as an assessment criterion to evaluate the Secretariat's support to Member States in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies and measures to promote the diversity of cultural expressions and to contribute to the goals of the Convention (Expected result 7 under Major Programme IV – Culture).
7. In revising the Operational Guidelines on "Information Sharing and Transparency" and approving a new framework for quadrennial periodic reports in 2019 ([Resolution 7.CP.12](#)), the Conference of Parties not only decided that the reports of Parties should reflect the manner in which civil society had participated in their preparation, but also invited Parties to provide information on measures targeting civil society organizations involved in the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions and aimed at providing those organizations with, *inter alia*:
 - (a) public funding to help them achieve the objectives of the Convention;
 - (b) opportunities for networking with public authorities and other civil society organizations;
 - (c) training opportunities to acquire skills;
 - (d) spaces for dialogue with public authorities to design and monitor cultural policies.
8. In order to facilitate Parties' cooperation with civil society in the preparation of their quadrennial periodic reports, the Secretariat designed an electronic form that is independent from the main report form and focuses on the measures implemented by civil society organizations to protect and/or promote the diversity of cultural expressions. If they deem it relevant, Parties may download this form and share it with civil society organizations involved in the preparation of the quadrennial periodic report as a tool for gathering their contributions. As highlighted in document DCE/21/14.IGC/6, of the 72 reports submitted in 2020 using the quadrennial periodic reporting framework in force since June 2019, 79% include measures or initiatives implemented by civil society organizations.
9. Furthermore, as part of its capacity-building programme on participatory policy monitoring, the Secretariat systematically encourages the active involvement of civil society in the multi-stakeholder consultations leading to the preparation of quadrennial periodic reports, including through the inclusion of civil society representatives in national teams. In 2020, virtual spaces for dialogue between representatives of public authorities and civil society were created with a view to systematizing and institutionalizing these consultative processes, which can foster transparent practices and encourage a more inclusive governance of culture.
10. Civil society also has the opportunity to contribute to the achievement of the Convention's objectives by submitting requests for funding to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (hereinafter "the IFCD") and, when these requests are approved by the Committee, by implementing projects in one or more of the areas covered by the Convention. The Operational Guidelines "Guidelines on the Use of the Resources of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity" state that non-governmental organizations (hereinafter "NGOs") from developing countries Parties to the Convention, and international non-governmental organizations (hereinafter "INGOs") that meet the definition of civil society and the criteria governing the admission of its representatives to the meetings of the Convention's governing bodies – as set out in the Operational Guidelines on the "Role and Participation of Civil Society" – may submit

funding requests to the IFCD. Since the IFCD became operational in 2010, almost three-quarters (74%) of the funding granted has been for projects submitted by NGOs and INGOs.²

11. The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a paradoxical effect on civil society organizations that support the work of artists and cultural communities: it has often undermined their viability by making financial support less secure, while at the same time requiring an unprecedented mobilization to raise the alarm about the increasingly precarious situation in which artists and cultural professionals find themselves worldwide, and about the erosion of measures and policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. From the outset of the pandemic, the Secretariat has sought to ensure that the unfiltered voices of civil society organizations and other stakeholders are heard. The ResiliArt movement, launched by UNESCO in partnership with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) on World Art Day (15 April 2020), is undoubtedly the most visible manifestation of this commitment. Its specific objective is to provide a platform for artists and cultural professionals to share the challenges they face, discuss potential solutions and collectively imagine a recovery of the cultural and creative sectors that is not detrimental to the diversity of cultural expressions, either at the national or international level. As of 30 November 2020, 231 debates had been organized in 101 countries. The ResiliArt movement represents an exceptional mechanism through which the Secretariat can raise awareness of the issues surrounding the Convention among existing and potential civil society partners from all regions of the world. In order to encourage the organization of ResiliArt debates and a sense of ownership of the movement among a growing number of governmental and non-governmental partners, the Secretariat has developed a “Guide to launching *your* ResiliArt movement”.³

III. Contribution of civil society to the work of the Convention’s governing bodies

12. The Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society” stipulate that civil society organizations authorized to participate as observers in the sessions of the Conference of Parties and the Committee may, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the respective bodies:
 - (a) maintain the dialogue with Parties in an interactive manner with regard to their positive contribution to the implementation of the Convention, preferably, as appropriate, before the sessions of the organs;
 - (b) be given the floor by the Chairperson of the respective body;
 - (c) submit written contributions relevant to the work of the respective bodies when authorized by the Chairperson, to be circulated to all delegations and observers by the Secretariat to the Convention as information documents.

Through its Decisions [9.IGC 9](#) and [10.IGC 6](#), the Committee specified the modalities through which these guidelines are implemented, as described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this document.

13. In accordance with Rule 7.4 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure, “non-governmental organizations having interests and activities in the field covered by the Convention, could be authorized by the Committee, according to modalities to be determined by the latter, to participate in its work as observers, without the right to vote, and subject to the provisions of Rule 20.3, at several of its sessions, at a single session or at a specific meeting of a session upon written request to the Director-General.” The annex to the Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society” establishes the criteria governing the admission of civil society representatives to the meetings of the Convention’s governing bodies and specifies the documents that must accompany the request for admission for any civil society representative other than a representative of a non-governmental organization maintaining

2. See document DCE/21/14.IGC/10 for further information.

3. To access the guide and obtain further information about the ResiliArt movement, visit <https://en.unesco.org/news/resiliart-artists-and-creativity-beyond-crisis>. A preliminary report on the findings of the ResiliArt movement can be found in document DCE/21/14.IGC/5.

official relations with UNESCO. This admission process, facilitated by the Secretariat, is an essential step in the collaboration between Parties and civil society in the framework of the work of the governing bodies of the Convention.

14. In recent years, an upward trend has been noted in the number and diversity of civil society representatives participating in the work of the governing bodies and in the side events held during statutory meetings (the Forum, Create | 2030 Talks, screenings of award-winning films, information meetings, etc.). This trend reflects an increased level of confidence between Parties and civil society, which both see the statutory meetings of the Convention as forums for dialogue among all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Convention.

Participation of observers ⁴						
Meeting	10 IGC	6 CP	11 IGC	12 IGC	7 CP	13 IGC
Total number	2 INGOs 39 NGOs	4 INGOs 28 NGOs	7 INGOs 49 NGOs 2 UNESCO Chairs 1 category 2 centre	6 INGOs 62 NGOs 5 UNESCO Chairs 4 category 2 centres	17 INGOs 79 NGOs 6 UNESCO Chairs 3 category 2 centres	12 INGOs 39 NGOs 7 UNESCO Chairs 2 category 2 centres
TOTAL	41	32	59	77	105	60

IV. Future prospects

15. At present, only a minority of the civil society organizations actively involved in the implementation of the Convention have completed the official procedures for admission to the statutory meetings of the Convention, as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure of the governing bodies and the annex to the Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”. With a view to build on and sustain the achievements made in recent years in terms of civil society’s contribution to the work of the Convention’s governing bodies, the Committee may wish to encourage civil society organizations wanting to take part in the governing bodies’ work to follow these procedures, and request assistance from the Secretariat in that regard. Formalizing the participation of civil society in the work of the Convention’s governing bodies could provide the Committee with a better visibility on its interlocutors and their areas of expertise, and enable it, where appropriate, to be in a better position to consult civil society on specific issues, as provided for in Article 23.7 of the Convention.
16. To date, the Civil Society Forum has been the privileged space for civil society representatives to discuss the challenges they face in implementing the Convention and which may be of interest to the Convention’s governing bodies. The report of the second Forum, prepared for the first time by a Bureau⁵ elected by the Forum’s participants, was submitted to the Committee at its thirteenth session, as part of the civil society activity report, pursuant to [Decision 9.IGC 9](#). However, it is unclear under what modalities future civil society reports should be submitted to the sessions of the Committee, particularly those preceding a session of the Conference of Parties, and thus of the Forum, i.e. sessions in odd years. At its tenth session, for example, the Committee had invited civil society organizations to present a report (oral and/or in writing) on the activities they had carried out in 2017, to be submitted to the Secretariat by 30

4. Other than Parties to the Convention and UNESCO Member States not Parties to the Convention.

5. The Bureau of the second Civil Society Forum is chaired by Ms Ananya Bhattacharya, Secretary of Contact Base (NGO, India), and includes a vice-chairperson, Mr Joshua Nyapimbi, Director of Nhimbe Trust (NGO, Zimbabwe), a General Rapporteur, Ms Silja Fischer, Secretary General of the International Music Council (INGO), and four sub-rapporteurs: Ms Cornelia Dümcke, member of the International Theatre Institute (INGO); Mr Daves Ghuzza, former Chairperson of Arterial Network (NGO, Côte d’Ivoire); Oana Barsan, Director, Cultura Contra Conflict (NGO, Romania); and Ouafa Belgacem, Chief Executive Officer, Culture Funding Watch (NGO, Tunisia).

September 2017 ([Decision 10.IGC 6](#)). At its eleventh session, the Committee had received four reports submitted by groups representing more than 100 civil society organizations. The Committee may wish to elaborate on the precise modalities for the preparation of the civil society activity reports that it wishes to consider at its annual sessions.

17. Lastly, since the Committee is called upon, in accordance with Rule 7.4 of its Rules of Procedure, to authorize the participation of non-governmental organizations that have interests and activities in the fields covered by the Convention, as observers, in its work, depending on modalities to be determined by itself, and since such organization are in conformity with the definition of civil society established in the Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”, the Committee may wish to be informed, on a regular basis to be determined, of the achievements and challenges encountered by these organizations in order to inform its work.
18. These considerations could pave the way for a reflection that the Committee may wish to undertake for the purpose of clarifying the modalities of its collaboration with civil society, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure and the provisions of the Convention and its Operational Guidelines, with the aim of capitalizing on existing cooperation and optimizing the contribution of civil society to its work.
19. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 14.IGC 15

The Committee,

1. *Having examined document DCE/21/14.IGC/15 REV*
2. *Recalling its Decisions 1.IGC 5c, 1.EXT.IGC 5, 5.IGC 4, 8.IGC 7a, 9.IGC 9, 10.IGC 6, 11.IGC 6, 11.IGC 10, 13.IGC 10, and the Resolutions of the Conference of Parties 2.CP 7, 4.CP 13, 6.CP 12 and 7.CP 14,*
3. *Further recalling the fundamental role of civil society in the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions and its contribution to the efforts of Parties to achieve the objectives of the Convention,*
4. *Recognizes the major challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose to non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, professionals in the cultural and associated sectors and groups that support the work of artists and cultural communities, and underlines the crucial role that they are called upon to play in helping the cultural and creative sectors to recover from the impact of the crisis;*
5. *Encourages Parties to provide financial or in-kind resources to support the sustainability of activities carried out by civil society organizations, as well as the participation of their representatives in meetings of the Committee;*
6. *Requests the Secretariat to facilitate the process for the admission of civil society representatives to its meetings, in accordance with the Operational Guidelines on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”, and further encourages representatives of civil society, as defined in the aforementioned Operational Guidelines, who meet the criteria set out in the annex thereto, to apply for admission;*
7. *Invites the Secretariat to work closely with the Bureau elected on the occasion of the second edition of the Civil Society Forum, on the margins of the seventh session of the Conference of Parties, to plan and organize the third edition of the Forum, which will be held prior to the eighth session of the Conference of Parties;*
8. *Further invites the Bureau, to be elected at the third edition of the Forum, to present a report on the outcomes of the Forum to the Conference of Parties at its eighth session;*
9. *Requests civil society organizations wishing to submit a written activity report to the Committee at its fifteenth session, to transmit it to the Secretariat in English and French by 11 January 2022 at the latest.*