

Intergovernmental Committee. Paris December 7-9 2009
3rd Ordinary Session
Summary Report for Culture Committee and UK Coalition for
Cultural Diversity

Present were representative from the 24 parties representing the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC); the 34 parties who were not members of IGC; a few national government observers who have yet to ratify or are in the process of ratification; various intergovernmental organisations; NGOs and civil society, who spoke through the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity.

Presiding Officers:

Assistant Director General for Culture: Ms Francoise Riviere
Chairperson: Mme Vera Lacoeylthe
Secretary of the Convention: Danielle Cliche

The session opened with an audiovisual address from the new Director General, Irina Bokova, who gave her support and stressed the significance of the Convention.

1 Adoption of detailed summary record of the second extraordinary session of the Committee, June 2009.

This session adopted draft operational guidelines for Article 16 – Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries: conducted a first discussion on the funding and operation of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (Article 18) and a first discussion to inform the Secretariat on measures to increase the visibility and the promotion of the Convention.

2 Strategy encouraging ratifications

There is concern over the regional imbalance reflected in the current 103 parties. Ratifications in the Arab States and Asia and the Pacific regions are low. However, it was noted that with India and China and Australia now amongst the Asia/Pacific signatories the majority of people in the region, and a huge percentage of the world's population, have now been brought into the Convention.

It was suggested that the socio-political factors informing the decisions of countries not to ratify needed to be taken into consideration and several countries recommended that there should be capacity building at national commission level particularly in the regions least represented.

There was a proposal that the issues impeding ratification should be examined and it was proposed that the discussion proposed for the 4th Congress of Parties should be brought forward for the 3rd Congress of Parties, in June 2011.

In summing up, Ms Riviere stressed the importance of the role of civil society in urging ratification and implementation of the Convention's objectives, and the importance of facilitating the exchange of views between the Congress of Parties and civil society.

3 Implementation of International Fund for Cultural Diversity (INCD) , preliminary steps

Contributions to the fund are voluntary and to date only 17 of the 103 signatories have made initial contributions and only a few of those have done so on a recurrent basis. In order to facilitate more countries to contribute the Chair stated the urgency of completing the operational guidelines for the allocation of the funds and their administration during the IGC session.

The total of contributions as of 4th December stood at \$2,132,384.36

Signatory states had submitted a list of experts for consideration. Of the total of 71 names submitted by national commissions before the deadline, there were 38 experts submitted from the European region. No-one had been recommended by the UK national commission.

It has been agreed that guidelines for the allocation of the funds should be operational during a pilot phase, from 2010-2012, after which its effectiveness would be evaluated and revised if necessary.

70% of the amount available in the Fund as of 1.7.10 should be allocated as the budget for the pilot phase (2010 – 2012), and the budget should respect the following:
a minimum of 60% for financing programmes/projects
a maximum of 20% for preparatory assistance
2% to be kept in reserve for financing projects regarding special situations, such as those foreseen in articles 8 (Measures to protect cultural expressions) and 17 (International cooperation in situations of serious threat to cultural expressions) of the Convention.

Each request for assistance will be evaluated by at least two members of the panel of experts. 6 experts were chosen from those submitted and a further 6 alternatives were selected who would be brought in to support the team as and when necessary. It was accepted that the team of experts should determine their own working practice.

There was concern that 6 experts could not reflect the diversity of the regions. However the addition of 6 alternatives was accepted as a compromise given the shortage of funds and the desire to maximise spend on projects/programmes rather than administration. The number of experts and the functioning of the team will be one of the aspects to be reviewed at the end of the two-year period.

4 Drafting operational guidelines on measures to increase visibility and promotion of Convention

23.6a (Intergovernmental Committee) requires that measures are taken to promote and monitor the implementation of the Convention. A consultation document had been issued with responses from the range of governmental, and civil society organisations detailing the actions taken which included events, advocacy, seminars, conferences, publications and various other initiatives to promote the Convention amongst its stakeholders. These responses had been taken into consideration by the Secretariat in the preparation of draft operational guidelines, to which lengthy amendments were proposed. The operational guidelines were accepted.

A feasibility study regarding the procedure and cost of creating an emblem for specific promotion of this Convention will be carried out for discussion at the next Committee.

A summary of measures by Parties, Civil Society and the Secretariat was published as an Annex to Decision 3.IGC 6 and included in the publication of the Decisions Taken at IGC3.

5 Preparation of operational guidelines on information sharing and transparency (Article 9)

All signatory parties are required to deliver periodic reports on measures taken to implement the convention. The timetable for submission will be directly related to the date of ratification. Parties will submit their reports 4 years after the date and they will then be presented to the following Congress of Parties. It was agreed that this should be done on a country by country, rather than on a regional basis.

Key considerations would be indicated in a questionnaire to be prepared by the Secretariat. Parties would not be required to refer to all articles of the Convention but various articles would be highlighted such as Articles 8 (Measures to protect cultural expressions), 11 (Participation of civil society) and 16 (Preferential treatment for developing countries)

In the long-term it will be important to develop quantifiable indicators. This will be facilitated by the work of the department of statistics which is developing a Statistical Framework for Culture (accepted at the 31st Conference) which will include recommendations for cultural indicators to present to the next General Conference. However, it is not expected that these will be operational for some years.

There are huge disparities in the collection of data and these often reflect the limited means of many countries to collect such data.

There was a wide-ranging discussion on factors to take into consideration in developing criteria for assessing best practice. The Secretariat will continue its work on the matter and submit it for examination at its next session.

It was pointed out that those countries who have not designated their points of contact should do so as soon as possible. The UK has not yet put forward a name.

6 Preparation of operational guidelines on exchange, analysis and dissemination of information (Art 19)

This was intended as a preliminary debate to inform the Secretariat. There will be a special session before the next IGC to discuss a presentation by experts on data and statistics and the challenges presented by trying to collect and unify this information.

The preparation of statistical data will be important for the preparation of the Parties' periodic reports and it was felt that however difficult the challenge, an indicator or group of indicators through which to monitor the development of diversity of cultural expression, would be important.

It was also suggested that data should be collected linking diversity of cultural expressions to the achievement of sustainable development (article 13). This was a priority for countries of the South and the responsibility of both Parties and the Secretariat.

In response to questions about Intellectual Property Rights in relation to data submitted Unesco's Legal Advisor commented that under Article 19, Unesco would hold rights to publish what has been submitted although authors would hold copyright.

The *Culture Link Network* is working in this area and the European Institute for Cultural Research is hosting *Compendium*, set up with support from the Council of Europe to help facilitate information gathering in support of intercultural dialogue and sustainability. The original focus has been on Europe but it will be extended to North Africa.

The outgoing Secretary, Ms Galia Saouma-Forero, also mentioned the work of the Global Alliance of Culture. This is a network for fundraising and a mechanism set up to facilitate partnerships. Its work is currently being reviewed and there is an ambition to transform it into a web platform for tri-sectoral partnerships i.e. collaboration between public services, private services and civil society. This network might also produce indicators for best practice on partnerships.

7 Provisional Agenda for next IGC – IGC4, December 2010

Amongst other matters carried over from IGC3, this will include discussion of draft operational guidelines on Article 10 (Education and public awareness) and the preparation of documents to be approved by the 3rd session of the Conference of Parties.

Prepared by Holly Aylett
December 14 2009