



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE 7 MSP

UCH/19/7.MSP/3REV
Paris, 8 April 2019
Original: English

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

Seventh session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room IV
20-21 June 2019

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda:

Summary Record of the Sixth Session of the Meeting of States Parties

This document contains the draft summary record of the sixth session of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 30-31 May 2017). States Parties may submit comments by email and/or in hard copy to the Secretariat of the 2001 Convention until the seventh session of the Meeting (20-21 June 2019).

Resolution required: paragraph 3.

1. The sixth session of the Meeting of States Parties (hereinafter “the Meeting”) to the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (hereinafter “the 2001 Convention”) took place on 30 and 31 May 2017. An Exchange Day on Underwater Cultural Heritage took place the day before, on 29 May 2017. Both meetings were held at UNESCO Headquarters. An event and film preview on the *Danton* shipwreck was organized in the evening of 30 May 2017, followed by a photo exhibition on the Cuban Cervera Fleet shipwrecks and a reception on 31 May 2017.
2. The draft summary record of this session, which was previously circulated, is contained in the annex to the present document.
3. The Meeting of States Parties may wish to consider the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 3 / MSP 7

The Meeting of States Parties, in its seventh session,

1. *Having examined* document UCH/19/7.MSP/3;
2. *Adopts* the Summary Record of the sixth session of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention included in the annex of the above-mentioned document.

ANNEX

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

A. Exchange Day on Underwater Cultural Heritage

1. The Exchange Day was organized to enrich the debate of the Meeting of States Parties. It focused on the contribution of the 2001 Convention to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter “SDGs”). It was opened by Mr Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General for Culture, and His Excellency Mr Alejandro Palma Cerna, the Chairperson of the fifth session of the Meeting of States Parties.
2. The Secretariat introduced the meeting by presenting the 2001 Convention and its importance for the achievement of the SDGs. Ms Wendy Van Duivenvoorde and Mr Jonathan Benjamin of the UNITWIN Network for Underwater Archaeology spoke on the urgent need to include underwater cultural heritage in all Ocean Literacy Initiatives. Mr Mourad El Amouri of the NGO Arkaeos then presented an example of how underwater cultural heritage research in Arles, France contributed to increasing tourism and thus to the achievement of SDG 14.
3. Mr Michel L’Hour, Director of France’s Underwater Archaeology Department, pointed out the immense damage done to ancient wrecks by deep sea trawling. He explained

that a single trawler can cover areas of approximately the equivalent of 5,000 football fields and suggested that this issue be taken into consideration in the context of the implementation of SDG 14. Mr Xavier Nieto Prieto of Cadiz University, Spain, further provided information about the destruction of coastal ecosystems and their underwater cultural heritage.

4. Mr Jiang Bo, Director for the Center for Underwater Archaeology in China, spoke on the importance of underwater cultural heritage protection for the achievement of the SDGs and, in particular, pointed out how the recovery of an ancient and very important wreck had brought tourism to Hailing Island in China and thus contributed to sustainable development.
5. The presentations were followed by a discussion during which international experts and representatives of States Parties took the floor and shared their views on the importance of bringing the protection of underwater cultural heritage to the attention of the United Nations and all its agencies, particularly about the challenges posed by trawling, pillaging and commercial exploitation.
6. In the afternoon, delegations were invited to a presentation on the 2001 Convention by the Secretariat, followed by another one on the conformity of the 2001 Convention with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea by Mr Mariano Aznar from the University of Jaume I, Spain. The participants then had the possibility to discuss with the representatives of the UNITWIN Network for Underwater Archaeology and its participating universities.

B. The Sixth Session of the Meeting of States Parties

7. The sixth Meeting of States Parties was opened on 30 May 2017 and attended by participants from 49 States Parties to the Convention, observers' delegations from 18 UNESCO Member States, 19 non-governmental organizations and several universities. UNESCO provided the Secretariat. A list of participants is available upon request from the Secretariat.

I. Opening Ceremony

8. The session was opened by UNESCO's Assistant-Director General for Culture, Mr Francesco Bandarin. He began by sharing the news on the Plurinational State of Bolivia's recent ratification of the 2001 Convention, and urged other UNESCO Member States not yet Parties to the Convention to follow this example. He then noted the need for increased visibility of the 2001 Convention and encouraged participants to think of innovative ways to make underwater cultural heritage more visible and accessible to the public. Finally, he expressed his appreciation to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (hereinafter "STAB") for its excellent work over the years.

II. Election of the Bureau: Election of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur of the Meeting

(Item 1 of the Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/1)

9. Mr Bandarin informed delegates of the composition of the Bureau of the previous sessions and called for the election of the new Bureau. Algeria proposed H. Exc. Mr Laurent Stefanini, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of France to UNESCO, as Chairperson of the Meeting. Palestine, Panama, Romania, and South Africa were proposed as Vice-Chairpersons and Mr David Measketh (Cambodia) was proposed as Rapporteur. The Bureau was subsequently and unanimously elected by acclamation and Resolution 1 / MSP 6 was adopted.
10. The newly elected Chairperson thanked the participants for their support and welcomed the Plurinational State of Bolivia as the 56th State Party to the Convention.

III. Adoption of the Agenda

(Item 2 of the Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/2)

11. The Secretariat presented the agenda of the session and the Chairperson invited the participants to propose amendments to the provisional agenda.
12. Honduras took the floor and suggested the addition of a new item concerning the reinforcement of the Convention's Secretariat. This proposal was strongly supported by several other States Parties including Algeria, Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Mexico, Nigeria, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Guatemala proposed the addition of another new item requesting a STAB technical mission to Guatemala. The proposals were accepted and the Meeting unanimously adopted the agenda, as amended, by Resolution 2 / MSP 6.
13. The delegate from Kuwait then informed the Meeting that Kuwait has taken all necessary steps to ratify the 2001 Convention and that the instrument of ratification will be deposited shortly. The Netherlands and Germany likewise informed the Meeting that their States were also proceeding towards ratification.

IV. Adoption of the Summary Record of the Fifth Session of the Meeting of States Parties

(Item 3 of the Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/3)

14. The Chairperson suggested the approval of the Summary Record of the fifth ordinary session of the Meeting, (28 and 29 April 2015). This document UCH/17/6.MSP/220/3 had been made available in advance and was adopted without amendments by Resolution 3 / MSP 6.

V. Reports on the work of the Bureau and on the activities of the Secretariat

(Item 4 of the Agenda, Documents UCH/17/6.MSP/4 and UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.4.1)

15. The Chairperson invited his predecessor, H. Exc. Mr Alejandro Palma Cerna, the Chairperson of the fifth session, to provide his report on the work of the Bureau during the last two years. Mr Palma Cerna reported in particular on his preparation to present the 2001 Convention at the UN Ocean Conference in New York in June 2017. He also spoke about the contribution of the 2001 Convention to the implementation of SDG 14 and on the improved cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic

Commission (hereinafter "IOC") of UNESCO, whose mandate is closely connected to the work of the 2001 Convention. While appreciating the work of the Secretariat, he endorsed Honduras' observations concerning the reinforcement of the Secretariat of the Convention. He observed that having only one Programme Specialist assigned to the Convention was insufficient in order to effectively promote the Convention. As a final personal proposition, Mr Palma Cerna suggested that two Bureau meetings be convened per year in order to strengthen cooperation between States Parties and to increase the visibility of the Convention.

16. The Secretariat was then requested to introduce the activities it had undertaken since the last session of the Meeting of States Parties. The Secretariat presented its work to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention and the capacity-building and awareness-raising activities implemented. It emphasized the need for consistent follow-up actions to be taken in relation to technical missions to States Parties, as it was the case of Madagascar, where a national meeting, a training course and community workshops were carried out by UNESCO following an initial emergency mission carried out by the STAB in April 2015. The Secretariat stressed the importance of good cooperation with the IOC and warmly thanked the departing Chairperson, Mr Palma Cerna, for his exceptional support during the last two years.
17. The Chairperson thanked the Secretariat and opened the floor for discussion. Italy remarked that the 2001 Convention was unfortunately far from being fully implemented and suggested that specialized police units in all States Parties be created to protect underwater cultural heritage.
18. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed the wish to increase synergies with other conventions, as well as establish closer cooperation with entities working in the field of competence of the 2001 Convention, such as the IOC. Portugal congratulated Guinea-Bissau for ratifying the 2001 Convention and stressed equally the need to strengthen the Secretariat's resources.
19. Togo expressed its concern about how poorly equipped African countries are for underwater archaeological research and the need for more professional training opportunities in Africa. He also thanked the Secretariat for its work and said it was important that States Parties were present at the UN Ocean Conference in New York.
20. The Representative of France and French Ambassador for the Oceans, Mr Serge Ségura, praised the Secretariat for its work and endorsed what had been said about the current precarious staff situation. Mr Ségura stressed that it was the responsibility of States Parties to increase the delivery power and visibility of the Convention, particularly within the framework of the United Nations in New York. He suggested the organization of a special session on the Convention in July 2017 during a meeting on legal protection in international waters.
21. The Secretariat commended France for its support concerning the UN Ocean Conference. It also echoed Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' wish for more synergies noting that several coordination meetings with IOC had taken place and the 1972 Convention cooperates with the 2001 Convention.

VI. Report and Recommendations of the STAB

(Item 4 of the Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/INF4.2)

22. The Chairperson noted that the sixth and seventh meetings of the STAB had taken place in Paris on 30 April 2015 and 10 May 2016 respectively. The reports and recommendations of both meetings have been made available in document UCH/17/6.MSP/INF4.2. The Chairperson then invited the Chairperson of the STAB, Ms Helena Barba Meinecke, to present the reports and recommendations of the meetings.
23. Ms Meinecke first reported on the STAB missions to Panama in July and October 2015 and how the STAB has advised State Parties. She then stressed that every State Party should have at least one specialized underwater archaeologist and that the security and safety of STAB members needed to be ensured during missions. Ms Meinecke thanked the accredited NGOs for promoting the Convention and suggested them to provide the Secretariat with awareness-raising tools developed by them.
24. Concerning the initiative to identify Best Practices, Ms Meinecke recommended that the criteria and procedures for their identification be further elaborated, the number of STAB members be increased from 12 to 24 and the scientific quality of STAB members be favored in their selection process. Ms Meinecke then suggested developing a "Red List for Underwater Heritage" focusing on factors which negatively affect heritage.
25. The Chairperson thanked the Chairperson of the STAB and invited the Meeting to take the floor. Grenada requested to put the recommendations of the Chairperson of the STAB in writing and to distribute the text to allow the meeting to consider them fully. This request was fulfilled. A discussion on the proposal to increase the number of STAB members ensued. While several delegations were in favor, Honduras objected, arguing there are not enough specialists in this field in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. Draft Resolution 4 was finally discussed in detail and then adopted as amended.

VII. Reinforcement of the Convention's Secretariat

(Item 4.bis of the Agenda, no document)

26. The Chairperson proposed to consider the newly introduced Item 4.bis on the Agenda concerning the strengthening of the resources of the Secretariat.
27. The Representative of Honduras, supported by many other delegations including Algeria, Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Hungary, Mexico, Nigeria, Romania, Spain, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, presented the draft resolution. He noted the lack of the necessary human and financial resources of the Convention endowed with only one Programme Specialist in its Secretariat for its functioning.
28. The States Parties who intervened requested the Director-General to strengthen the Secretariat by providing specialized and qualified personnel working exclusively for the

2001 Convention, prior to the next session of the Meeting of the States Parties, of at least two additional permanent staff members and the allocation of the appropriate budget to the Convention. Furthermore, they requested the Director-General to present a report to the seventh session of the Meeting of States Parties in 2019 on the implementation of this resolution.

29. Following the debate, the Chairperson suggested to have the resolution formulated in more general terms. The delegations objected and requested the use precise language since vaguely drafted resolution had already been adopted in a previous session [Resolution 6 / MSP 3 Paragraph 8] with no results.
30. Algeria requested clarification with regards to the placement of the 2001 Convention within the Sector under the Section for Cultural Heritage Protection Treaties together with the 1954 Convention. Algeria underlined that it had not ratified the 1954 Convention and requested expressly that its objection to this hierarchical structure be reflected in the Summary Record of the session. The Secretariat clarified the reasoning behind this organizational structure and the text of Resolution 4.bis was adopted, as amended.

VIII. Election of six members of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB)
(Item 5 of the Agenda, Documents UCH/17/6.MSP/5 and UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.5)

31. The Meeting of State Parties examined Item 5 on the Agenda, concerning the election of six members of the STAB. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the candidatures received and the applicable procedures.
32. The Chairperson announced that the number of candidates was higher than the number of seats to be filled out. Bulgaria, Islamic Republic of Iran, South Africa and Tunisia also withdrew their candidatures. The Chairperson warmly thanked all concerned delegations for their goodwill and friendly cooperation and announced that a vote would still be necessary for electoral Groups I and II.
33. A debate about the currently applicable Rules of Procedure for the STAB election then took place. Spain proposed to leave the election to the next day and to move immediately to the next agenda item on the Evaluation of the Examples of Best Practices in the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. The Chairperson agreed to this and the election was thus reported to give the Delegations more time for consideration and consultation.
34. The Minister of Communication, Culture, Sports and Civic Education of Togo addressed the Meeting on the importance of the 2001 Convention for Africa and underscored the particular importance of the STAB in providing direct technical support to State Parties. He expressed Togo's strong support for the Convention by proposing a member to the STAB.

35. On 31 May 2017, the second day of the session, the Chairperson announced that the Meeting will begin with the election of six members of the STAB and invited delegations to take the floor.
36. The representative of Romania took the floor to announce the withdrawal of the Romanian candidate and to suggest an amendment of the Rules of Procedure for the election of the STAB members. The Chairperson expressed his gratitude to Bulgaria, Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Romania, and South Africa, for generously withdrawing their candidates and to the members of electoral group III for leaving a floating seat. He then announced that the number of candidates was equal to the number of seats available and proposed to elect six candidates by acclamation. All the six nominated candidates at present were elected unanimously by Resolution 5 / MSP 6.

IX. Evaluation of the Examples of Best Practices in the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

(Item 6 of the Agenda, Documents UCH/17/6.MSP/6 and UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.6)

37. The Chairperson referred to Resolution 4 / MSP 5, by which the Meeting invited States Parties to the Convention to provide examples of Best Practices related to Underwater Cultural Heritage and noted that seven of such examples had been proposed and had been duly evaluated. He invited the Chairperson of the STAB, Ms Meinecke, to present the evaluation of the seven examples submitted by Mexico, Portugal and Spain carried out by the STAB and its recommendation to the Meeting of States Parties.
38. The representatives of Spain, Portugal and Mexico were then invited to present their examples respectively. The representative of Spain gave an overview of the four examples submitted by his country, namely the protection of Andalusia's underwater archaeological heritage; the Bou Ferrer Wreck, a Roman shipwreck located in Alicante; the wreck of Deltebre I, which sank in 1813 in Catalonia; and a study of trade, export and distribution networks of wine in connection with the Cap del Vol and Cala Cativa shipwrecks, located in Alt Emporda.
39. The representative of Portugal then presented the Portuguese example of Best Practices related to the documentation of 130 sites of underwater cultural heritage in the Sea of Cascais and the representative of Mexico presented the two examples from Mexico, namely an Underwater Archaeology Museum in Playa Bonita, Campeche; and the involvement of local communities in the protection of their own cultural heritage at Nevado de Toluca, a stratovolcano located in the southwest of the Toluca valley.
40. The Chairperson congratulated all three countries for their good work, encouraged more countries to submit their examples for evaluation by the STAB, and thanked the STAB for its thorough evaluation of these examples. Finally, the Chairperson suggested that the examples of Best Practices should get an official label from UNESCO.

41. After a short discussion, all States Parties supported the designation of the examples provided as Best Practices, Resolution 6 / MSP 6 was adopted, and the meeting adjourned for the day.

X. Consideration for Adoption of the Ratification and Implementation Strategy and follow up actions

(Item 7 of Agenda, Documents UCH/17/6.MSP/7 and UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.7)

42. The Secretariat reminded the Meeting that the fifth session of the Meeting of States Parties in 2015 as well a Working Meeting of Delegations in 2016 had already discussed the document on the ratification and implementation strategy (UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.7) and suggested that delegations could consider the adoption of the strategy and debate on the follow up measures that have already been decided. The Secretariat noted that statistics showed a steady rise in ratifications of the 2001 Convention, following approximately the same pace as the 1954 and 1970 Conventions. It also encouraged States Parties to promote ratification among countries to whom they have particular ties, to promote the underwater cultural heritage in the context of the United Nations, and to think beyond ratification and towards implementation.
43. The Chairperson agreed and stressed that a key question remained how to raise awareness of the Convention among States which have not yet ratified the Convention and suggested to promote it within regional groups and in the United Nations. He then opened the floor to delegations, observer states and NGOs.
44. The representative of France, Mr Serge Ségura, insisted on the opportunities for State Parties to promote the Convention at the forthcoming Ocean Conference in New York and suggested that regular contact is established between representatives of the 2001 Convention and the UNCLOS Office Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) in New York. Mr Ségura emphasized the importance of reminding European Union (EU) Member States of the benefits of ratification and requested to draw up a list of target Member States. He finally emphasized the role of the Secretariat as a link between States.
45. While endorsing France's statement, Grenada proposed to add a paragraph to the draft resolution appealing once again to the Director-General to reinforce the Secretariat of the 2001 Convention. Even if the Chairperson reminded that the Meeting had already adopted Resolution 4.bis / MSP 6 in this regard, the paragraph was added to draft Resolution 7.
46. Italy endorsed the statement by France and stressed the importance of raising awareness about the Convention in the framework of the EU. Togo urged countries with strong technical expertise to share their knowledge with other States Parties. Argentina, on its part, offered to share experiences with other Latin American countries, and endorsed Grenada's proposal to add a paragraph on the strengthening of the Secretariat's resources. Furthermore, it requested the inclusion of a paragraph underlining the Secretariat's crucial role in sensitizing about the Convention and

invited the Secretariat to produce simple outreach manuals that could be distributed in diving schools in all Member States of UNESCO.

47. Resolution 7 / MSP 6 approving the new Ratification Strategy was then adopted, as amended.

XI. Underwater Cultural Heritage in Emergency Situations

(Item 8 of Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/8)

48. The Secretariat presented Document *UCH/17/6.MSP/8*, recalling that States in emergency situations resulting from conflicts or natural or human-made disasters often lack the needed capacities to monitor and protect underwater cultural heritage. It highlighted the importance of the *Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict* adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2015, as a key reference in this field. The Secretariat also recalled that an emergency mission of UNESCO will be undertaken in Chuuk Lagoon, Federal States of Micronesia, to monitor and evaluate the conservation challenges of the endangered shipwrecks in the lagoon.
49. The Chairperson opened the floor to the delegations. The representative of Togo asked for a concrete example of natural disaster threats to underwater cultural heritage. The Secretariat provided the example of the 2005 tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean, which destroyed infrastructure such as the museum related to underwater cultural heritage in Galle, Sri Lanka, and greatly affected several submerged coastal sites. Furthermore, the Secretariat shared further information about the emergency mission to the Chuuk Lagoon, Federal States of Micronesia and the urgent concerns caused by unexploded ordnance used in fishing located in some of the fifty shipwrecks at the bottom of the lagoon which pose a potential danger to the population as well as the health of the waters of the lagoon.
50. Mr L'Hour, Director of France's Underwater Archeology Department, explained that a number of recent studies on the French coastlines have revealed that climate change, particularly the increasing frequency of storms, cause great damage to underwater cultural heritage and constitute a reason for deep concern. Looting on sites uncovered by storms was also identified as a problem. He added that experts had observed the coastline receding by more than 20 meters in a very short time period including several Neolithic and Paleolithic sites that had appeared from under the sediment and then vanished from the map in a matter of months, swept away by the waves. Mr L'Hour said his team of experts, who were studying this phenomenon, felt defenseless when confronted with these rapid changes.
51. In his response to Togo's question on France's response to the threat of climate change, Mr L'Hour noted that despite limited resources, a special fund for emergency interventions to be used in emergency situations was to be created. Regional constituencies for underwater archaeology also survey the coastline and alert experts in case of a storm. All in all, Mr L'Hour stressed that the current efforts were insufficient and that more specialized staff was needed. Paradoxically, he said, while this issue remains unexplored and unobserved in many countries, the threat is one of

the current biggest concerns for underwater archaeologists. The representative of South Africa echoed France's concern and said they were experiencing the same problem on a recurring basis.

52. The Secretariat underlined the importance of the cooperation between the Convention's Secretariat and the UN Ocean Network on this matter and the need to communicate better. It called on States to prioritize reporting and to transmit information to the Secretariat, so that it can be reported to the UN Ocean Network. The Secretariat also expressed concern about the frozen shipwrecks in the Arctic that were affected by melting of the ice and being washed away and suggested that States Parties consider adopting measures in the future.
53. Mexico announced that they had already established a natural disaster fund to protect cultural heritage, despite that it was not limited to underwater cultural heritage. Algeria underlined the importance of keeping a dialogue with the coastguards and raising their awareness. Morocco called for the development of better preservation techniques in response to damages to underwater cultural heritage resulting from climate change.
54. The representative of Italy, supported by Albania, France, South Africa and Romania proposed that the Secretariat collect data from the States Parties on damage suffered by underwater cultural heritage, especially as a consequence of emergency situations arising from conflict situations, natural disasters, and the consequences of climate change, as well as on measures to strengthen the protection of heritage. Italy proposed that a report be presented at the next Meeting of States Parties while hoping the Secretariat would be reinforced in the meantime. The Secretariat indicated that it would be difficult to produce such a report in the current financial situation and the staffing resources available and suggested that the UNITWIN University Network for Underwater Archaeology could possibly assist in the work. Grenada stressed that all mention of site coordinates in any report needed to remain confidential, and was reassured in that regard.
55. Ukraine proposed an amendment to the text of the resolution, namely the third paragraph to include the word "occupation". The representative of Cuba, supported by other delegations, expressed strong reservations against this addition, as the word "conflict" did already cover this category of situations.
56. South Africa proposed the elaboration of a "Red List identifying the areas around the world where underwater cultural heritage was at risk". The Secretariat recalled that a preceding International Meeting on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, which had taken place in September 2016, had recommended the elaboration of a "Red List of Underwater Cultural Heritage Artefact types in danger".
57. Resolution 8 / MSP 6 requesting the Secretariat to take the 2001 Convention into account in the implementation of the "Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict" and to report on this at the seventh session of the Meeting of States Parties in 2019 was adopted as amended. It also asks the Secretariat to collect data

from States Parties on damage suffered by underwater cultural heritage and to report on this to the next session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2019.

XII. Evaluation and Accreditation of Non-Governmental Organizations

(Item 9 of Agenda, Documents UCH/17/6.MSP/9 and UCH/17/6.MSP/INF.9)

58. The Chairperson who explained that this item was to be considered in a closed session and invited the representatives of NGO's to leave the room, recalled that in accordance with Chapter VI C of the Operational Guidelines of the Convention, "The Meeting of States Parties shall review already accredited NGOs every four years as to maintaining or terminating relations with the organization in question."
59. The Chairperson announced the names of the NGOs that had been reviewed, including Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology (ACUA), Association for the Development of Maritime Archaeological (ADRAMAR), Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA), Arkaeos, Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE), German Society for the Promotion of Underwater Archaeology (DEGUWA), Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC), Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS), Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) as well as the ICOMOS International Committee for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH). He also informed that NGOs accredited at the fifth session of the Meeting of State Parties will be reviewed at the next session in 2019, i.e., Maritime Archaeology Trust (MAT), Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS), Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) and Groupe de Recherche en Archéologie Navale (GRAN).
60. The Chairperson gave the floor to the Chairperson of the STAB who presented the evaluation by the STAB of accredited NGOs, as contained in Information Document 9. Ms Meinecke explained that the evaluation had been carried out on the basis of the documents received from the NGOs themselves. In addition, the STAB looked at the nature and the legal status of the NGOs, their scope and aim, geographical presence and impact, the types of members, the description of the associations, and the added value that they bring to the Convention. The STAB recommended that all NGOs keep their accreditation and that ADRAMAR and Arkaeos increase their cooperation with the statutory bodies of the Convention including by engaging in operational activities to support the Convention in the coming years.
61. The Chairperson gave the floor to the delegations. France informed the Meeting that the two French NGOs in question, namely ADRAMAR and Arkaeos had focused on respecting the Département des recherches archéologiques subaquatiques et sous-marines (DRASSM) in the Ministry of Culture, and had thus not been involved in the implementation of the Convention as much as desired. In addition, it expressed the NGOs commitment to work more actively in this regard in the future.
62. Resolution 9 / MSP 6, re-accrediting all NGOs was adopted.

XIV. Other issues

(Item 10 of the Agenda, no document)

63. The Chairperson informed the Meeting that Guatemala had requested the inclusion of an additional Item to the Agenda on a request for STAB assistance concerning the underwater cultural heritage at Lake Atitlan and the so-called Samabaj site, which is a sunken Mayan Temple. The Chairperson gave the floor to the representative of Guatemala to explain the details.
64. The representative of Guatemala explained that the country had ratified the Convention at the end of 2015 and that the Ministry of Culture and Sports was now seeking to enhance their technical capacities in order to ensure the proper implementation of the Convention. Since the country does have the necessary expertise, it requested the dispatch of a STAB mission to help elaborate a management plan.
65. The Secretariat reminded the Meeting that this mission has been discussed for many years and that Spain has generously agreed to fund it. Preliminary discussions with the Guatemalan authorities were already in place, and the aim was to organize the mission before the end of the year, depending on the availability of all parties involved.
66. The Resolution 10 / MSP 6 approving the mission of the STAB to Guatemala was adopted.
67. The Secretariat announced that a proposal for inclusion of another additional item was received. The representative of Palestine supported by Algeria, Cuba, France, Grenada, Italy, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Romania and Spain suggested revising the Rules of Procedure to improve synergies with other UNESCO Conventions as proposed in draft resolution 10b.
68. The representative of Albania expressed concern about the proposal since it concerns the revision of the Rules of Procedure of several Conventions and noted the difficulties for States Parties to contribute actively to this process.
69. The Chairperson announced the adoption of Resolution 10B / MSP 6, stressing the need to update and harmonize the Rules of Procedure and requesting the Secretariat to include an item on the Agenda of its next Meeting in 2019 on the revision of the Rules of Procedure. The Resolution also invited States Parties to submit to the Secretariat proposals in English and/or French for the amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the 2001 Convention by 31 May 2018 at the latest. All proposals would be presented to the Bureau and subsequently to all States Parties in the course of 2018.

XV. Date and venue of the next session of the Meeting of States Parties

(Item 11 of the Agenda, Document UCH/17/6.MSP/11)

70. The Chairperson announced that the next Meeting of States Parties was scheduled for spring 2019 and that France would try to find a location outside of UNESCO Headquarters, preferably somewhere near the sea, to convene the next session. Grenada pointed out that a meeting at UNESCO Headquarters might be easier for some of the delegations.

71. In responding Grenada about an inquire on the STAB recommendations, the Chairperson confirmed that these recommendations would not be discussed for adoption, since some of them were official recommendations by the STAB and some others were observations from the Chairperson herself. The Chairperson added that the recommendations that were of interest would need debate. Spain expressed the wish to endorse some of the recommendations straight away.
72. Grenada, considering the recommendations of the President of the STAB, explained that it was not in favor of increasing the number of STAB members from 12 to 24. Italy questioned the utility and legal aspect of a “Red List of actors that endangered the underwater cultural heritage” as it had been proposed. The Chairperson agreed that the STAB’s recommendation of the creation of a “Red List of treasure-hunters” would not reach consensus, and raised the question of eventual legal action that could be taken against UNESCO by those who were put on the said list.
73. The Chairperson suggested the adoption of draft Resolution 11bis taking note of the STAB’s useful recommendations and asking for the inscription of a separate item in the agenda of the next session to examine the STAB recommendations more thoroughly. Resolution 12 / MSP 6 deciding that the next session will be held in spring 2019 was equally adopted.

XV. Closure

The Chairperson thanked all the participants for coming, the Secretariat for its organization, as well as the interpreters, NGOs and everyone else who made the Meeting a success.

The Secretariat thanked the Chairperson and all the participants for their contribution to the successful session, as well as the interpreters and the different teams from the Secretariat, including the Conventions Common Services team.

A reception and photo-exhibition, offered by the Permanent Delegation of Cuba, closed the event.