



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Convention for the fight
against the illicit trafficking
of cultural property

Extra.SC

C70/15/EXTRA.SC/2
Paris, March 2015
Original English

Limited distribution

Extraordinary Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, Paris, 1970)

**Extraordinary Session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room IX
18 May 2015**

Provisional agenda point 2: Report of the Subsidiary Committee

This document contains the Report of the Subsidiary Committee on its activities presented to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, Paris, 1970).

Decision required: paragraph 31

Introduction

1. The first Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention took place in October 2003 in order to examine issues concerning the effective implementation of the Convention (CLT-2003/CONF/207/5). In accordance with 187 EX/Decision 43 and in consideration of the discussions held at the meeting held on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Convention, the Executive Board convened a second Meeting of States Parties, which took place in June 2012. At that occasion, the Meeting of States Parties decided to convene its meetings every two years. The Meeting of States Parties also decided to establish a Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention of 1970 to support the implementation of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the “Subsidiary Committee”), to be convened every year.
2. In accordance to the Rules of Procedure adopted by Meeting of States Parties in June 2012, the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of the States Parties was tasked with the fulfillment of the following functions:
 - To promote the purposes of the Convention, as set forth in the Convention;
 - To review national reports presented to the General Conference by the States Parties to the Convention;
 - To exchange best practices, and prepare and submit to the Meeting of the States Parties recommendations and guidelines that may contribute to the implementation of the Convention;
 - To identify problem areas arising from the implementation of the Convention, including issues relating to the protection and return of cultural property;
 - To initiate and maintain co-ordination with the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation in relation to capacity building measures combating illicit traffic in cultural property;
 - To report to the Meeting of States Parties on the activities it has carried out.
3. The Subsidiary Committee held its first session on 2-3 July 2013 and its second session from 30 June to 2 July 2014.

Background information

Number of States Parties to the 1970 Convention

4. As of March 2015, there are 127 States Parties to the Convention¹. Since the Second Meeting of States Parties in 2012, the Kingdoms of Bahrain, Lesotho and Swaziland, as well as the Republics of the Union of Myanmar and Chile, have joined the Convention.

Current Members of the Subsidiary Committee and Bureau

¹ The list of States Parties to the 1970 Convention is available at the following address :
<http://www.unesco.org/eri/la/convention.asp?KO=13039&language=E&order=alpha>

5. The Committee is composed by 18 members (in alphabetical order): Bulgaria, Chad, China, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Romania and Turkey.

6. Their terms of office are:

Until the end of the Third Meeting of States Parties (2015): Chad, China, Croatia, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Romania and Turkey.

Until the end of the Fourth Meeting of States Parties (2017): Bulgaria, Ecuador, Greece, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco and Nigeria.

Current Members of the Subsidiary Committee by Electoral Group

Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V(a)	Group V(b)
Greece (2017)	Bulgaria (2017)	Ecuador (2017)	China (2015)	Chad (2015)	Egypt (2015)
Italy (2017)	Croatia (2015)	Mexico (2017)	Japan (2017)	Madagascar (2017)	Morocco (2017)
Turkey (2015)	Romania (2015)	Peru (2015)	Pakistan (2015)	Nigeria (2017)	Oman (2015)

Members of the Bureau of the 1970 Convention (elected on 2 July 2013)

Chairperson: Mr. Mauricio Escanero, Mexico
 Rapporteur: Ms. Artemis Papathanassiou, Greece
 Vice- Chairs: Bulgaria, China, Egypt and Nigeria

Statutory Meetings

7. The First Session² of the Subsidiary Committee took place from 2 to 3 July 2013 at UNESCO’s Headquarters. During its First Session, the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties adopted the following Decisions:

- Decision 1.SC 1, by which it elected Mr. Mauricio Escanero (Mexico) as Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties, Ms. Artemis Papathanassiou (Greece) as Rapporteur of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties; and Bulgaria, China, Egypt and Nigeria as Vice-Chairpersons of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties;
- Decision 1.SC 2, by which it adopted the agenda of the First Session;
- Decision 1.SC 3, by which it adopted its own Rules of Procedure;

² The documents of the First Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the 1970 Convention are available at the following address: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/subsidiary-committee/1st-sc-session-2013/>

- Decision 1.SC 4, by which it decided to establish an informal working group composed of all 18 Members of the Subsidiary Committee under the coordination of the Chairperson of this Committee to work on the Draft Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and on other relevant items in preparation of the next Subsidiary Committee session;
- Decision 1.SC 5, by which it encouraged all UNESCO Member States which are not yet parties to the 1970 Convention to consider the ratification of this instrument;
- Decision 1.SC 6, by which it expressed its gratitude to the States Parties (China, Greece, Switzerland and Turkey) which had contributed financially to the organization of this Session;
- Decision 1.SC 7, by which it expressed its utmost concern about the current limited human resources of the 1970 Convention Secretariat as well as its recognition of all the efforts made by the Director-General to provide the Secretariat of the 1970 UNESCO Convention with financial resources, invited her to continue with those efforts and strengthen the Secretariat with human resources, and invited all States Parties to contribute to the functioning of the Secretariat by providing adequate human and financial resources.
- Decision 1.SC 8, by which it decided to consider, at its Second Session, the possibility and the modalities of establishing a fund to support the implementation of the 1970 Convention; and recommended to the Director-General to analyze the terms that would allow, according to the budget and the financial capacities of the Organization, to allocate an amount to cover the participation costs for the representation of developing countries.
- Decision 1.SC 9, by which it decided to hold its Second Session from 30 June to 2 July 2014.

8. Following Decision 1.SC 4, the Informal Working Group met under the coordination of the Chairperson of the Committee in November 2013 and February, March and April 2014.

9. Two major tasks concentrated the attention of the Informal Working Group: the preparation of the Draft Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention, and the preparation of the draft Decision on the roadmap for the fulfillment of the functions of the Subsidiary Committee. These two items were considered in detail during the Second Session of the Subsidiary Committee.

10. It is important to underline that the Informal Working Group followed a methodology of work geared to secure, in the spirit of transparency and inclusion, both the effective fulfillment of the mandate of the Informal Working Group and the continuous engagement of Observers, benefiting from the support of the Secretariat as required.

11. The Informal Working Group fulfilled the discharge of its mandate successfully, thanks to the hard work and the commitment of all its Members to build bridges of consensus. In this regard, it was especially helpful that the Government of Bulgaria hosted in optimal terms the fourth and final meeting of Informal Working Group in the city of Sofia.

12. The Second Session³ of the Subsidiary Committee took place from 30 June to 2 July 2014 at UNESCO's Headquarters. During its Second Session, the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties adopted the following Decisions:

- Decision 2.SC 1, by which it adopted its agenda;
- Decision 2.SC 2, by which it approved the summary records of the Subsidiary Committee's First Session;
- Decision 2.SC 3, by which it took note with satisfaction of the Secretariat's report on its activities in 2012-2014; welcomed the many training activities carried out by the Secretariat and field offices, their growing scope and the continued effectiveness of the global capacity-building strategy; also welcomed action taken to raise awareness of the fight against trafficking in cultural property; thanked those States Parties (Bulgaria, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland) which had generously contributed extra-budgetary support for the training and awareness-raising activities conducted by the Secretariat; invited States Parties to strengthen their support for activities carried out to ensure effective implementation of the Convention; took note of the increase in tasks assigned to the Secretariat and of the need to strengthen it in human and financial terms; encouraged the Director-General to ensure the provision of the necessary financial and human resources to the Secretariat for the adequate fulfillment of its tasks; and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts to implement the Convention and invited it to submit a report on its activities at the Committee's Third Session;
- Decision 2.SC 4, by which, after having examined Document C70/14/2.SC/4 and its Annex, as well as the 'Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard-setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part II – 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property' (Document IOS/EVS/PI/133 REV.), it took note of the recommendations proposed in the aforementioned evaluation and decided to consider them in its further work; called upon the States Parties to strengthen the Secretariat with the level of expertise, stability and resources required to respond to the ever-increasing demand for its services and requested the Secretariat to integrate more effectively Global Priority Africa into planning and programs in support of the 1970 Convention and prioritize the use of all the awareness-raising tools (videos, website, events) in light of their specific quality and effectiveness and in particular to continue to expand the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws by increasing the coverage of legislation and the availability of translations; further requested the Secretariat, within the human and financial resources, to: a) develop a comprehensive capacity building strategy – with a focus on those regions that have low ratification rates – that foresees a longer-term engagement with States Parties, enhanced follow-up, and the use of a variety of different capacity building modalities, undertaking in this regard a more comprehensive approach to awareness raising at the national level based on a systematic identification of the target audience, of the most appropriate mechanisms to be used and of clear objectives to be achieved, and b) improve the Convention website in order to increase its user-friendliness, and introduce more frequent alerts about issues related to the 1970 Convention in order to direct visitors of the UNESCO's general website to the Convention website; and familiarize State Parties, especially in those regions that only make limited use of it, with

³ The documents of the Second Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the 1970 Convention are available at the following address: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/subsidiary-committee/2nd-sc-session-2014/>

the 1970 Convention website as a tool for information sharing and knowledge management;

- Decision 2.SC 5, by which, after having examined document C70/14/2.SC/5, it appreciated the efforts undertaken by the Informal Working Group in providing a consensus draft of Operational Guidelines; expressed its gratitude to the Government of Bulgaria for its financial support; and decided to approve by consensus the draft Operational Guidelines presented in document C70/14/2.SC/5/Rev for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and to submit them to the Third Ordinary Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention for possible adoption;
- Decision 2.SC 6, by which it thanked the Informal Working Group, established by Decision 1.SC 4 of the Subsidiary Committee during its first session, for the good results of its work in the fulfillment of its mandate; and decided to establish an Informal Working Group composed of all 18 Members of the Subsidiary Committee under the coordination of the Chairperson of this Committee to contribute to the better preparation of the next Subsidiary Committee session; decided to hold an Extraordinary Session of the Subsidiary Committee, pending on the availability of extra-budgetary resources to cover the organizational costs, in order to address the urgent matter of providing further momentum to the good preparation of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention; and requested the Secretariat to assist the informal working group as required.

Rules of Procedure

13. The Rules of Procedure of the Subsidiary Committee⁴ were adopted by the Subsidiary Committee at its First Ordinary session in Paris, UNESCO's Headquarters, 2 – 3 July 2013, by Decision 1.SC 3.

Draft Operational Guidelines

14. Following Decision 1.SC 4 of the Subsidiary Committee, which was adopted during its first session (July 2013), an Informal Working Group (IWG) was created to work on the Draft Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and on other relevant items in preparation of the next Subsidiary Committee session. Composed of all the 18 Members of the Subsidiary Committee⁵, the IWG met under the coordination of the Chairperson of the Committee in November 2013 and February, March and April 2014.

15. The IWG met for the first time on 26 November 2013 at UNESCO Headquarters in order to consider the methodology that the Informal Working Group would follow to fulfill its duties. At this first meeting, the Informal Working Group decided on a methodology of work geared to secure, in the spirit of transparency and inclusion, both the effective fulfillment of the mandate of the Informal Working Group and the continuous engagement of Observers. The Secretariat reiterated its disposition to support the Informal Working Group as required, As part of this methodology of work, the IWG decided on a schedule of work foreseeing meetings in February, March and April 2014.

16. In accordance to this methodology, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Informal Working Group, was entrusted with the preparation of a

⁴ The Rules of Procedure of the Subsidiary Committee are available at the following address:
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/1970_SC_RulesofProcedure_en_Rev.pdf

⁵ Members of the Informal working group: Bulgaria, Chad, China, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Romania and Turkey.

second draft of the Operational Guidelines, building upon the draft presented by the Secretariat in June 2013 (C70/13/1.SC/4), the debates held during the First session of the Subsidiary Committee in July 2013, and the written inputs submitted by Member and Observer States to the consideration of the IWG by November 2013. In the preparation of this draft, the Secretariat provided substantive advice to the Chairperson.

17. The second draft of the Operational Guidelines was circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 28 January 2014, in its original version in English and with an informal translation into French. Member and Observer States were invited to submit written inputs to this second draft no later than 7 February 2014. The consideration of the second draft and related written inputs was scheduled to take place during the second meeting of the IWG in February 2014.

18. As scheduled, the IWG met for a second time on 17-18 February 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters. On an exceptional basis, the Secretariat financed the interpretation into English and French during the second meeting of the IWG. During this second meeting, the IWG considered the second draft of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and related written inputs kindly submitted by Members and Observer States. The Secretariat supported the IWG as required, including by written substantive advice transmitted to the Chairperson. As a result, in accordance with its adopted methodology of work, the IWG once again entrusted the Chairperson, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group, to prepare a third draft of the Operational Guidelines reflecting the progress achieved by consensus during the second meeting of the IWG. The third draft was circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 27 February 2014, in its original version in English and with an informal translation into French, together with the compendium of the written inputs submitted by Member and Observer States to the second draft that was considered at the second meeting of the IWG. Member and Observer States of the Subsidiary Committee were invited to submit written inputs to the third draft no later than 10 March 2014. Observer States were also invited to attend the third meeting of the Informal Working Group scheduled to take place in March 2014. The consideration of the third draft and related written inputs was scheduled to take place during that third meeting of the IWG. In preparation of the third meeting of the IWG, the written inputs submitted by Members and Observer States to the third draft were circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 10-12 March 2014.

19. As scheduled, the IWG met for a third time on 17-18 March 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters. The interpretation of the meeting into English and French was made possible thanks to the generous financial support from the Government of Bulgaria. The IWG considered the third draft of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and related written inputs kindly submitted by Members and Observer States. The IWG benefited from the valuable contributions of the Observer States that kindly attended this meeting. The Secretariat supported the IWG as required, including by written substantive advice transmitted to the Chairperson. As a result, in accordance with its adopted methodology, the Informal Working Group once again entrusted the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group, to prepare a fourth draft of the Operational Guidelines reflecting the progress achieved by consensus at the third meeting of the IWG.

20. The fourth draft was circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 3 April 2014, in its original version in English and with an informal translation into French, together with the consolidated compendium of the written

inputs submitted by Member and Observer States to the third draft that was considered at the third meeting of the IWG. Member and Observer States were invited to submit written inputs to the fourth draft no later than 16 April 2014. Observer States were also invited to attend the fourth meeting of the IWG scheduled to take place in April 2014. The consideration of the fourth draft and related written inputs was scheduled to take place during that fourth meeting of the IWG.

21. In preparation of the fourth meeting of the IWG, a consolidated compendium of the written inputs submitted by Members and Observer States to the fourth draft were circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 22 April 2014. As scheduled, the IWG met for a fourth time on 28-30 April 2014, in Sofia, Bulgaria, generously hosted by the Government of Bulgaria Mr. Peter Stoyanovich, Minister of Culture of Bulgaria, kindly opened the meeting of the IWG. The Informal Working Group considered the fourth draft of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and related written inputs kindly submitted by Member and Observer States. The IWG also benefited from the valuable contributions of the Observer States that kindly attended this meeting. The Secretariat kindly supported the Informal Working Group as required, including by written substantive advice transmitted to the Chairperson. As a result, in accordance with its adopted methodology, the Informal Working Group once again entrusted the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group, to prepare a fifth draft of the Operational Guidelines reflecting the overall progress achieved by consensus by the Informal Working Group. The fifth draft of the Operational Guidelines was circulated by the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee to all States Parties of the 1970 Convention on 20 May 2014 in its original version in English and informal translation into French. The IWG decided that the fifth draft should be submitted for the consideration of the Second session of the Subsidiary Committee (30 June - 2 July 2014).

22. The fifth and final draft of the Operational Guidelines prepared by the IWG was presented to the consideration of the Second Session of the Subsidiary Committee, as document C70/14/2.SC/5. After having examined it with the active participation of Observer States, the Subsidiary Committee appreciated the efforts undertaken by the IWG in providing a consensus draft of Operational Guidelines; expressed its gratitude to the Government of Bulgaria for its financial support; and decided to approve by consensus the following draft Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and to submit them to the Third Ordinary Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention for possible adoption. It should be underlined that the draft Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention were approved by consensus by the Subsidiary Committee at its Second Session as the positive result of an intensive year of work that was characterized by its strict adherence to a methodology geared to secure, in the spirit of transparency and inclusion, both the effective fulfillment of the mandate of the Subsidiary Committee and the thorough engagement of Observers along the whole process.

Roadmap for the fulfillment of the functions of the Subsidiary Committee

23. Following Decision 1.SC 4 of the Subsidiary Committee, the IWG considered how to advance on the fulfillment of functions of the Subsidiary Committee specified in Article 14.6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of States Parties to the 1970 Convention and further restated in Section I of the Rules of Procedure of the Subsidiary Committee.

24. As a result, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee, in his capacity as Coordinator of the IWG, was entrusted with the preparation of a draft decision on the Roadmap for the

fulfillment of the functions of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention. The corresponding draft was prepared in consultation with the Members of the IWG, taking into account the written advice provided by the Secretariat and the recommendations proposed by the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) in the document 'Evaluation of UNESCO's Standard setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part II – 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property' (IOS/EVS/PI/133 REV.).

25. The Roadmap for the fulfillment of the functions of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties of the 1970 Convention prepared by the IWG was presented to the consideration of the Second Session of the Subsidiary Committee. No decision was taken during that Second Session in this regard. Subsequently, by consensus of the Bureau, the Roadmap was considered by the IWG on 18 March 2015 and approved by consensus by the IWG, as an integral part of this Report, to be submitted to the Subsidiary Committee for its adoption as per the Rules of Procedure of the Subsidiary Committee.

Outreach activities

26. The Subsidiary Committee undertook the following outreach activities to promote the convergence of efforts with other relevant actors at UNESCO and beyond in support of the 1970 Convention:

- The Members of the Bureau of the Subsidiary Committee met on 5 November 2013 with Ms Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, in order to share perspectives on the process of revitalization of the 1970 Convention. The Members of the Bureau of the Committee took this opportunity to reiterate the Committee's support to the Director General and to recognize her commitment and leadership in favor of the promotion of the combat against illicit trafficking of cultural and archeological objects. The Members of the Bureau of the Committee reiterated the Committee's commitment to work together with the Director General of UNESCO and the President of the General Conference, as well as with all Member States of UNESCO and States Parties of the 1970 Convention, in order to fully discharge the mandate given to the Committee. The Members also stressed the importance of the constructive dialogue and the collective work of the international community to take decisive actions to effectively combat illicit trafficking of cultural and archeological objects at the Third Assembly of States Parties to the 1970 Convention that will take place in 2015.
- Similarly, on 7 November 2013 the Members of the Subsidiary Committee met with Mr. Hao Ping, President of the 37th General Conference UNESCO. The Committee Members took this opportunity to encourage the President of the General Conference to exercise his internationally recognized leadership in support of the promotion of the effective combat against illicit trafficking of cultural and archaeological objects. The Members of the Committee also welcomed the high priority that the UNESCO General Conference assigns to the revitalization of the 1970 Convention in the framework of the Strategy for the Organization for the 2014-2021 period.
- On 21 June 2014, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of the States Parties of the 1970 Convention had the opportunity to participate in an informal meeting at the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee session held in Doha in June 2014, that also included the participation of H.H. Mrs. Sheikh Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, as well as of Amb. José Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros, Chairperson of the 9th

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director General for Culture of UNESCO. The shared objective of this informal meeting of Chairpersons of Committees of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions was to take the initiative in further strengthening the synergies among all UNESCO's Cultural Conventions and making sure that, with a holistic vision, these Conventions mutually reinforce each other and act as a unified corpus for the better fulfillment of their complementary goals, in the conviction that this will serve in a meaningful way to provide further momentum to the international community efforts to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage worldwide, as further discussed in the section "Synergies among UNESCO's Cultural Conventions" of this Report.

- The Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee had the opportunity to provide information about the work of the Committee to the Third International Conference of Experts on the Return of Cultural Property that took place in Greece in October 2013 and to the Fourth International Conference of Experts on the Return of Cultural Property that took place in China in September 2014.
- Similarly, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee had the opportunity to provide information about the work of the Subsidiary Committee to the International Council of Museums International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property, on November 2013 and July 2014.
- Also, as part of the Mexican Delegation and with the objective to contribute to maximize the convergence of the efforts in UNESCO and UNODC, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee participated in the third meeting of the Open-ended intergovernmental expert group on protection against trafficking in cultural property that took place in on January 2014 and which decided by consensus on the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences that were adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 18 2014 with Resolution A/69/489.

Synergies among UNESCO's Cultural Conventions

27. The 1970 Convention is a pillar for the protection and safeguarding of World Heritage. Its revitalization will contribute to, and benefit from, the further convergence of efforts among all of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions. With this conviction, and with the full backing of the Subsidiary Committee, the Chairperson of the Subsidiary Committee of the 1970 Convention invited the Chairpersons of the Committees of all of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions to collectively initiate a further strengthening of the synergies between these conventions and, with a holistic vision, ensure that they mutually reinforce each other. In this way, the conventions could form a unified front for the improved fulfillment of their complementary goals: the support, protection, safeguarding and understanding of our cultural and natural heritage. This is particularly important as the international community advances towards the definition of the Post-2015 Development Agenda at the United Nations, in which the linkages between Culture and Development and Peace should be fully recognized and projected forward.

28. As a first step in this direction, as previously indicated, at the World Heritage Committee session held in Doha in June 2014, the Chairpersons of the 1970, 1972 and 2003 Conventions agreed on the relevance of convening a meeting of the six Chairpersons in 2015 to give impetus to these efforts. The Director-General of UNESCO expressed "great interest" in this initiative at UNESCO's Information Meeting of the Executive Board in July 2014. Undoubtedly, she will play a central role in its successful outcome. This interest has been echoed by numerous delegations

in many instances. A Decision was taken in this regard by the Committee of the 2nd Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention in December 2014 to organize yearly meetings.

29. The First Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Committees of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions holds great potential for institutional innovation and political impact. It will also constitute a milestone in the history of UNESCO's Culture Sector. Moreover, it will strengthen the ongoing revitalization of international efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property and promote its return to its countries of origin, which is an important pillar of the protection, safeguarding and understanding of cultural and natural world heritage.

30. The initiative will take place in the context of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO, which provides a unique opportunity to reflect about the future of the Organization's standard-setting action in the face of contemporary challenges and emerging needs. It is intended to provide further momentum to the international community's efforts to protect and nurture cultural diversity, in safeguarding cultural and natural heritage and fostering creativity worldwide.

31. The Subsidiary Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION

The Subsidiary Committee,

1. Having examined document C70/15/EXTRA.SC/2,
2. Decides to adopt the Report on the activities it has carried out to the Third Meeting of the States Parties contained in this document
3. Authorizes, in accordance to Rule 45.2 of its Rules of Procedure, its Chairperson to submit this Report on its behalf.