



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



• Convention for the Protection of
• Cultural Property in the Event
• of Armed Conflict
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REPORT:
***FIRST MEETING OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE EVENT OF ARMED
CONFLICT***

1 rue Miollis 75015

Bonvin

Monday 22 May 2017

10 am - 6 pm

Attending:

The staff of the Secretariat of the 1954 Convention and the following Permanent Delegations: Cambodia, Mali, Morocco, Mexico, Japan, Germany, Hungary, Finland, Switzerland, Cyprus, Croatia, France, Uruguay, Palestine, Egypt, Armenia, Argentina, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Greece.

I. Opening of the meeting

The first meeting of the Informal Working Group of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict was held on Monday 22 May 2017. The establishment of the Group was governed by **DECISION 11.COM 7** of the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Event of Armed Conflict which set out the following points in its paragraphs 1 and 2:

- *Having examined Document C54/16/11.COM/7,*
- *Decides to create an Informal Working Group, composed of Committee members, wishing so, as well as of two experts per Electoral Group, with complementary expertise in order to propose recommendations to its Twelfth Meeting in particular on the implementation of Article 10 (a) of the 1999 Second Protocol;*

The **Chairperson of the Committee and presiding officer, H.E. the Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Cambodia**, opened the meeting by thanking the 1954 Convention Secretariat, Committee members and experts attending the meeting. He reminded the meeting of the objectives and the circumstances of the establishment of the Informal Group relating to the method of granting enhanced protection to cultural property.

The **Assistant Director-General for Culture** then thanked the meeting, and recalled the importance of the 1954 Convention. He said that he was aware that the work of that Informal Group was not easy and that a single day would likely not suffice to finish it.

The **Chairperson of the Committee** then announced that the countries that had ratified the Second Protocol could take part in the meeting, as well as two experts per electoral group. Lastly, he proposed **Mr Souleymane Konate (Mali)** as rapporteur of the Informal Group. With no objections, the proposal was adopted by the Group.

II. Adoption of the agenda

The Chairperson of the Committee (Informal Group) proceeded to the adoption of the agenda, and invited the meeting to make observations and put forward modifications. With no further comments, the agenda was adopted as initially presented.

III. Methods to evaluate the conditions for granting enhanced protection (Art.10 (a))

The discussions opened on the methods to evaluate the conditions for granting enhanced protection under Article 10 (a) of the Second Protocol to the Convention of 1954.

Several participants, including Palestine, Argentina, Japan, Greece, Belgium and Morocco, spoke concerning this point. The statements mostly aimed to ensure the adoption of a methodology for the Informal Group itself and limits for the work at hand.

Palestine suggested that the Informal Group study the conditions for the granting of enhanced protection *one criterion at a time*. Belgium noted that Article 10 (a) contained some confusing notions, particularly the criterion “*of the highest importance for humanity*”.

In that connection, the presiding officer reminded the meeting that Decision 11.Com 7 stipulated that the Informal Working Group was intended to discuss Article 10 (a) of the Second Protocol only. He then informed the meeting that the discussions of the day concerned immovable cultural property.

The **Secretariat** read out, for clarification, the definitions of the Second Protocol relating to criteria for the granting of enhanced protection.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture pointed out that there were three definitions in total and that it was necessary to find a clear definition to suit everyone and prevent confusion.

Morocco stated that it might be necessary to modify the three criteria, and most importantly to establish a more specific work methodology for the Informal Group; for instance by projecting texts onscreen that participants could amend.

The presiding officer asked the rapporteur and Cambodia to arrange for the projection of the text, which was possible since Room XIII was equipped with a projector.

Furthermore, the Secretariat read out the conditions defining the notion of “*cultural heritage of the greatest importance for humanity*”.

Finland, Germany and Japan emphasized that as the definitions and criteria were clearly set down in the Second Protocol, they would prefer the Informal Group to discuss “***who evaluates them and how the evaluations could be funded***”.

The representative (expert) of Belgium reminded the meeting that the question was all the more important since the Secretariat had already received requests for the granting of enhanced protection for cultural property that was not inscribed on the World Heritage List. Therefore, the idea was that an advisory body could take care of it and carry out a scientific study so as to provide an opinion and enable the Secretariat to consider that type of property on the basis of scientific arguments.

In addition to Belgium and other participants, the presiding officer accepted the proposal from Finland, Germany and Japan. He asked the rapporteur to draw up a draft recommendation for a text relating to the determination of advisory bodies to carry out scientific studies on requests for the granting of enhanced protection (especially for cultural property not inscribed on the World Heritage List), and the means for funding such studies.

Based on the recommendation from the presiding officer, a text was put forward and amended by the participants. Its final adopted version is as follows:

The Informal Working Group makes the following recommendations to the Committee:

- 1. Rely on the advisory bodies (ICOMOS, ICOM, ICA, IFLA and the International Committee of Blue Shield) to make recommendations to the Committee for a methodology of scientific evaluation of requests for granting of enhanced protection to immovable cultural properties not inscribed on the World Heritage List or cultural properties not included in the Memory of the World Register, as well as other categories of cultural property covered by the 1954 Convention;*
- 2. Examine possible ways of financing these scientific evaluations in the framework of the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict;*
- 3. Request the Secretariat to examine possible ways of financing such scientific evaluations in the framework of existing international initiatives (such as the ALIPH Fund)*

and other donors, as well as to appeal to States Parties to the Second Protocol to ensure funding.

However, several issues remained pending concerning the types of funds that might be available to carry out these scientific studies assigned to an advisory body.

IV. Procedural issues

The Secretariat read out the points regarding the issue of procedures relating to requests for enhanced protection.

Morocco pointed out that at this stage the Informal Group could not address procedural issues, because it (the Informal Group) was not even sure whether the evaluations would be funded according to its recommendations.

Japan also asked *what would happen if the situation were to remain the same and the recommendations of the Informal Group were not taken into account.*

In that respect, the Secretariat stated some alternative options.

V. Other business

Under this agenda item, the Secretariat provided general information regarding the national reports on the state of cultural property under enhanced protection, which the Secretariat was awaiting. Furthermore, the next meeting of the bureau would take place on **22 September 2017**.

The presiding officer, H.E. the Ambassador of Cambodia, thanked the Secretariat and all the participants for their contributions and for making themselves available. He then declared the meeting closed.