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## Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention at its first session (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27 to 29 June 2006), amended at its second session (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 16 to 19 June 2008), at its fifth session (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris 2 to 4 June 2014) and at its ninth session (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 5 to 7 July 2022)

### I FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

#### Rule 1 Functions of the Assembly

In accordance with Article 4 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter 'the Convention'), adopted during the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris, from 29 September to 17 October 2003 at its 32nd session, the General Assembly of the States Parties (hereinafter 'the Assembly') was established as the sovereign body of the Convention. The Convention outlines the functions of the Assembly. The Assembly adopts its own Rules of Procedure.

### II PARTICIPATION

#### Rule 2 States Parties to the Convention

The representatives of all States Parties to the Convention may participate, with the right to vote, in the work of the Assembly.

### Rule 3 Observers

- 3.1 The representatives of Member States of UNESCO not parties to the Convention, and of Associate Members, as well as of permanent observer missions to UNESCO may participate in the work of the Assembly as observers, without the right to vote, and subject to Rule 16.3.
- 3.2 Representatives of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations which have concluded mutual representation agreements with UNESCO, as well as observers of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations invited by the Director-General, may participate in the work of the Assembly, without the right to vote and subject to Rule 16.3.

## III ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

### Rule 4 Ordinary and Extraordinary Sessions

- 4.1 The Assembly shall meet every two years in ordinary session in accordance with Article 4.2 of the Convention.
- 4.2 The Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session if it so decides or at the request either of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter 'the Committee') or of at least one-third of the States Parties.

### Rule 5 Date and Place

- 5.1 The Director-General shall determine the date of the ordinary session. The Director-General shall communicate such date to all States Parties and observers.
- 5.2 Unless the date has been decided by the Assembly, the Director-General shall determine the date of the extraordinary session, which shall then be set within sixty days, unless logistically not possible, following the date of the request referred to in Rule 4.2. The Director-General shall communicate such date to all States Parties and observers.

5.3 Ordinary and extraordinary sessions shall be held at the Headquarters of UNESCO, unless the Assembly decides to meet elsewhere.

## Rule 6 Online sessions

- 6.1 The Assembly may hold online sessions only during periods of emergency or in exceptional circumstances rendering *in praesentia* meetings impracticable.
- 6.2 At an ordinary or extraordinary session, the Assembly may decide to hold an online session by a simple majority of States Parties present and voting.
- 6.3 Should at least one-third of the States Parties propose the holding of an online session while the Assembly is not in session, the Director-General shall consult all the States Parties by correspondence. The Assembly shall hold an online session, unless one third of the States Parties disagrees to the proposal.
- 6.4 Elections by secret ballot held pursuant to the present Rules in the course of an online session shall be conducted in *praesentia*. The Secretariat shall make the necessary arrangements therefor, including the place and time of the election, which shall be notified to States Parties in advance of the ballot. Other voting held pursuant to the present Rules shall preferably be conducted in *praesentia*.

## Rule 7 Provisional Agenda

- 7.1 The provisional agenda of the session shall be prepared by the Director-General.
- 7.2 The provisional agenda of an ordinary session shall include:
- (a) Any question required by the Convention and the present Rules of Procedure;
  - (b) Any question the inclusion of which has been decided by the Assembly at a previous session;
  - (c) Any question referred by the Committee;
  - (d) Any question proposed by the States Parties to the Convention;
  - (e) Any question proposed by the Director-General.
- 7.3 The provisional agenda for an extraordinary session shall only include those questions for which the session has been convened.

- 7.4 The Secretariat shall circulate to the States Parties and observers the provisional agenda at least sixty days before the opening of an ordinary session of the Assembly and as soon as possible, and preferably fifteen days before the opening of an extraordinary session.

**Rule 8 Adoption of the Agenda**

The Assembly shall adopt its agenda at the beginning of each session.

**Rule 9 Amendments, deletions and new items**

The Assembly may amend, delete or add new items to the agenda so adopted if so decided by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties present and voting.

## IV BUREAU

**Rule 10 Bureau**

- 10.1 The Bureau shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson(s) and the Rapporteur.
- 10.2 The Bureau shall coordinate the work of the Assembly and fix the order of business of the session. It shall also assist the Chairperson in carrying out her or his functions.
- 10.3 The Bureau, convened at the request of its Chairperson, shall meet as frequently as deemed necessary. The Bureau may, if the Chairperson deems it appropriate, be consulted by correspondence.

**Rule 11 Election of officers**

- 11.1 The Assembly shall elect the Chairperson, up to five Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur at the opening of each session in conformity with the principle of equitable geographical representation.

- 11.2 The term of office of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson(s) and the Rapporteur will run from the opening of the session of the Assembly in which they are elected until the closing of the session.
- 11.3 The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson(s) and the Rapporteur shall not be eligible for immediate re-election after completing two consecutive terms.

## **Rule 12 Powers and duties of the Chairperson**

- 12.1 In addition to exercising the powers and duties which are conferred upon her or him elsewhere by the present Rules of Procedure, the Chairperson shall open and close each plenary meeting of the Assembly. She or he shall direct the discussions, ensure observance of the present Rules of Procedure, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions. She or he shall rule on points of order and, subject to the present Rules of Procedure, shall control the proceedings and the maintenance of order. She or he shall not vote, but she or he may instruct another member of her or his delegation to vote in her or his place.
- 12.2 Should the Chairperson be absent during a meeting, or part thereof, her or his powers and duties shall be exercised by one of the Vice-Chairpersons, selected at the discretion of the Chairperson. A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

## **V CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**

### **Rule 13 Quorum**

- 13.1 A quorum shall consist of a majority of the States Parties referred to in Rule 2 and represented at the Assembly.
- 13.2 The Assembly shall not decide on any matter unless a quorum is present.

#### **Rule 14 Public nature of meetings**

- 14.1 Meetings shall be held in public unless decided otherwise by the Assembly.
- 14.2 Any decision taken by the Assembly at a private meeting shall be announced at a subsequent public meeting.

#### **Rule 15 Subsidiary bodies**

- 15.1 The Assembly may establish such subsidiary bodies, including working groups, as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.
- 15.2 The Assembly shall define the composition and the terms of reference (including mandate and duration of office) and, if necessary, the quorum of such subsidiary bodies at the time of their establishment.
- 15.3 Each subsidiary body shall elect its Chairperson.
- 15.4 In appointing members of subsidiary bodies, due regard shall be given to principle of equitable geographical representation.

#### **Rule 16 Order and time-limit of speeches**

- 16.1 The Chairperson shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their wish to speak.
- 16.2 For the convenience of the discussion, the Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker.
- 16.3 The consent of the Chairperson must be obtained whenever an observer wishes to address the Assembly.

#### **Rule 17 Draft resolutions and amendments**

- 17.1 Draft resolutions and amendments may be proposed by the States Parties and shall be transmitted in writing to the Secretariat of the Assembly, which shall circulate them to all participants.

17.2 As a general rule, no draft resolution or amendment shall be discussed or put to the vote unless it has been circulated reasonably in advance to all participants in the working languages of the Assembly.

### **Rule 18**    **Points of order**

18.1 During the discussion of any matter, a State Party may rise to a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately ruled upon by the Chairperson.

18.2 A State Party may appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson. The appeal shall be put to the vote immediately, and the Chairperson's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the States Parties present and voting.

### **Rule 19**    **Procedural motions**

During the discussion of any matter, a State Party may propose a procedural motion: suspension or adjournment of the meeting, adjournment of the debate or closure of the debate.

### **Rule 20**    **Suspension or adjournment of the meeting**

During the discussion of any matter, a State Party may move the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting. Such motions shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to the vote.

### **Rule 21**    **Adjournment of the debate**

During the discussion of any matter, a State Party may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. On moving the adjournment, the State Party shall indicate whether it moves the adjournment *sine die* or to a particular time which it shall specify. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one speaker may speak in favour of, and one against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.



### **Rule 22** Closure of the debate

During the discussion of any matter, a State Party may move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other speaker has signified her or his wish to take part in the discussion. If application is made for permission to speak against the closure, it may be accorded to not more than two speakers, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. If the Assembly is in favour of the closure, the Chairperson shall declare the closure of the debate. The Chairperson may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this rule.

### **Rule 23** Order of procedural motions

Subject to Rule 18.1, the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals before the meeting:

- (a) to suspend the meeting;
- (b) to adjourn the meeting;
- (c) to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
- (d) for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion.

## **VI WORKING LANGUAGES**

### **Rule 24** Working languages

- 24.1 The working languages of the Assembly shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
- 24.2 Speeches made at the Assembly in one of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other languages.
- 24.3 Speakers may, however, speak in any other language, provided that they make their own arrangements for interpretation of their speeches into one of the working languages.
- 24.4 The documents of the Assembly shall be issued in all the working languages.

**Rule 25**    **Deadline for the distribution of documents**

The documents relating to the items on the provisional agenda of each session of the Assembly shall be distributed, either in paper format or electronically, at the latest thirty days before the opening of the ordinary session, and as soon as possible in the case of an extraordinary session, to all States Parties and observers.

**Rule 26**    **Summary records**

The Secretariat shall prepare summary records of all statements made during the plenary meetings of the Assembly in English and French for approval at the opening of the next session.

**VII**    **VOTING****Rule 27**    **Voting rights**

Each State Party shall have one vote in the Assembly.

**Rule 28**    **Consensus**

Every effort shall be made to adopt decisions in the Assembly by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be adopted by vote.

**Rule 29**    **Conduct during voting**

After the Chairperson has announced the beginning of voting, no one shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

**Rule 30**    **Simple majority**

30.1    When the Assembly resorts to voting, decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the States Parties present and voting, except as otherwise provided for in the present Rules of Procedure.

- 30.2 The decision concerning the amount of the contributions, in the form of a uniform percentage applicable to all States Parties which have not made the declaration referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 26 of the Convention, shall be determined by a simple majority vote of the States Parties present and voting which have not made the above-mentioned declaration.

**Rule 31 Voting by show of hands and roll-all**

- 31.1 Except as otherwise provided for in the present Rules of Procedure, voting shall be by show of hands.
- 31.2 When the result of a vote by show of hands is in doubt, the Chairperson may take a second vote by roll-call. Vote by roll-call shall also be taken if it is requested by not less than two States Parties. The request shall be made to the Chairperson before the voting takes place or immediately after the vote by show of hands. Vote by roll-call shall be taken for the decision mentioned in Rule 30.2.
- 31.3 When a vote is taken by roll-call, the vote of each State Party participating shall be inserted in the summary records.

**Rule 32 Order of voting on proposals**

- 32.1 If two or more proposals, other than amendments, relate to the same question, they shall, unless the Assembly decides otherwise, be voted on in the order in which they were submitted. The Assembly may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.
- 32.2 A motion requiring that no decision be taken on a proposal shall have priority over that proposal.

**Rule 33 Voting on amendments**

- 33.1 When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Chairperson shall put them to the vote starting with the amendment

deemed by her or him to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and so on. In case of doubt, the Chairperson shall consult the Assembly.

- 33.2 If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be put to the vote.
- 33.3 A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal.

#### **Rule 34 Meaning of the expression 'States Parties present and voting'**

For the purpose of the present Rules of Procedure, the expression 'States Parties present and voting' means States Parties casting an affirmative or negative vote. States Parties who abstain from voting are considered as not voting.

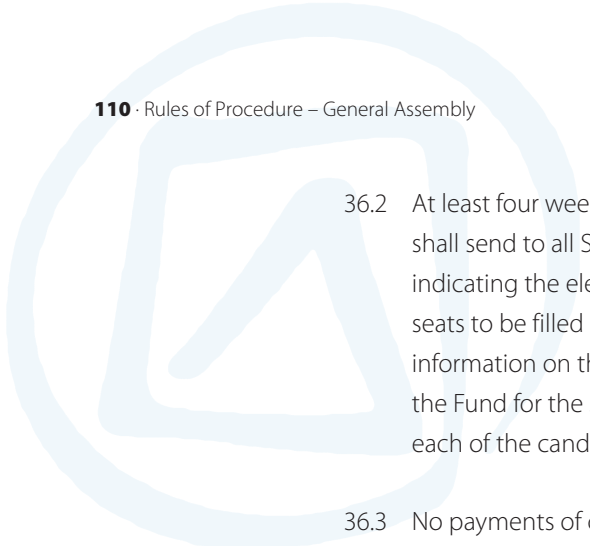
### **VIII ELECTIONS AND TERM OF OFFICE OF THE COMMITTEE**

#### **Rule 35 Geographical distribution**

- 35.1 The election of Members of the Committee shall be conducted on the basis of the electoral groups of UNESCO, as determined by the UNESCO General Conference at its most recent session, it being understood that 'Group V' shall consist of two separate groups for the African and Arab States.
- 35.2 The seats in the Committee composed of 24 Members shall be distributed among electoral groups in proportion to the number of States Parties from each group, provided that, after such distribution, at least three seats have been attributed to each group.

#### **Rule 36 Procedures for the presentation of candidatures to the Committee**

- 36.1 The Secretariat shall ask all States Parties, three months prior to the date of the election, whether they intend to stand for election to the Committee. States Parties are requested to send their candidature to the Secretariat at least six weeks prior to the opening of the Assembly.

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- 36.2 At least four weeks prior to the opening of the Assembly, the Secretariat shall send to all States Parties the provisional list of candidate States Parties, indicating the electoral group to which they belong and the number of seats to be filled in each electoral group. The Secretariat shall also provide information on the status of all compulsory and voluntary contributions to the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage made by each of the candidates. The list of candidatures will be revised as necessary.
- 36.3 No payments of compulsory and voluntary contributions to the Fund (for the purpose of presenting a candidature to the Committee) will be accepted later than a week before the opening of the Assembly.
- 36.4 The list of candidatures shall be finalized three working days prior to the opening of the General Assembly. No candidature will be accepted in the three working days preceding the opening of the Assembly.

### **Rule 37 Election of Members of the Committee**

- 37.1 The election of Members of the Committee shall be conducted by secret ballot except that, where the number of candidates within geographical distribution is the same as or less than the number of seats to be filled, the candidates shall be declared elected without the need to hold a ballot.
- 37.2 Before the election begins, the Chairperson shall appoint two tellers from among the delegates present; She or he shall hand to them the list of States Parties entitled to vote and the list of candidate States Parties. She or he shall announce the number of seats to be filled.
- 37.3 The Secretariat shall prepare for each delegation having the right to vote an envelope without any distinguishing mark and separate ballot papers, one for each of the electoral groups. The ballot paper for each electoral group shall bear the names of all the candidate States Parties in that electoral group.

- 37.4 Each delegation shall cast its vote by encircling the names of those States for which it desires to vote.
- 37.5 The tellers shall collect from each delegation the envelope containing the ballot papers and shall count the votes, under the supervision of the Chairperson.
- 37.6 The absence of any ballot paper in the envelope shall be considered an abstention.
- 37.7 Ballot papers on which more names have been circled than there are seats to be filled as also those containing no indication as to the intention of the voter shall be considered invalid.
- 37.8 The counting of the votes for each electoral group shall take place separately. The tellers shall open the envelopes, one by one, and shall sort the ballot papers into electoral groups. The votes cast for the candidate States Parties shall be entered on lists prepared for that purpose.
- 37.9 The Chairperson shall declare elected those candidates who obtain the greatest number of votes up to the number of seats to be filled. If two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, and, as a result, there are still more candidates than seats to be filled, there shall be a second secret ballot restricted to those candidates who obtained the same number of votes. If in the second ballot two or more candidates obtain the same number of votes, the Chairperson shall draw lots to decide the elected candidate.
- 37.10 When the counting of the votes is completed, the Chairperson shall announce the results of the ballot separately for each of the electoral groups.

## IX SECRETARIAT OF THE ASSEMBLY

### Rule 38 Secretariat

- 38.1 The Director-General of UNESCO or her or his representative shall participate in the work of the Assembly, its subsidiary bodies and the Bureau without the right to vote. She or he may, at any time, make either oral or written statements to the Assembly on any question under discussion.
- 38.2 The Director-General of UNESCO shall appoint an official of the Secretariat of UNESCO to act as Secretary to the Assembly, as well as other officials who shall together constitute the Secretariat of the Assembly.
- 38.3 The Secretariat shall receive, translate and distribute all documents; arrange for the interpretation of the discussions; prepare summary records; and publish the adopted resolutions and distribute them to the States Parties.
- 38.4 The Secretariat shall also perform all other duties necessary for the proper conduct of the work of the Assembly.

## X AMENDMENT AND SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

### Rule 39 Amendment

The Assembly may amend the present Rules of Procedure by a decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties present and voting, except when they reproduce provisions of the Convention.

### Rule 40 Suspension

The Assembly may suspend the application of any of the present Rules of Procedure, except when they reproduce provisions of the Convention, by a decision taken by a two-thirds majority of the States Parties present and voting.

