**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE  
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Electronic Bureau consultation**

**9 to 12 November 2020**

**Item 1:  
Meeting modality of the   
fifteenth session of the Committee**

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary**  Given the continuing uncertainty surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau is invited to decide on the meeting modality for the fifteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee, following discussions on this topic at the third meeting of the Bureau (15.COM 3.BUR) and an electronic consultation with members of the Committee.  **Decision required**: paragraph 4 |

1. The present electronic consultation was called for following the decision of the Bureau on 30 October 2020 ([Decision 15.COM 3.BUR 4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/15.COM%203.BUR/4)) , which discussed how to convene the fifteenth session of the Committee in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The Committee members were invited to express their preference between a fully online meeting from 14 to 19 December 2020 and a postponement of the fifteenth session to 2021 until such a time that a presential meeting can be safely held. The Secretariat sent a letter on 3 November 2020 to initiate the consultation with all members of the Committee. It provided a detailed explanation about each option, including the advantages and challenges for each one as well as the procedural requirements involved.
3. The electronic consultation closed at noon on 6 November 2020. The results showed that twenty States supported holding the meeting fully online while four preferred a postponement to 2021. The vast majority of the members of the Committee expressed a preference to hold a fully online meeting from 14 to 19 December 2020. The results of this consultation are listed nominally by member of the Committee (with comments) in the annex.
4. The Bureau of the Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 15.COM 4.BUR 1**

The Bureau,

1. Having examined document LHE/20/15.COM 4.BUR/1 and its annex,
2. Recalling [Decision 15.COM 3.BUR 4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions-bureau/15.COM%203.BUR/4),
3. Takes note of the preference of the members of the Committee to hold the fifteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as a fully online meeting from 14 to 19 December 2020;
4. Decides that the fifteenth session of the Committee take place, due to the impossibility of holding a meeting *in-presentia* during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, exceptionally as a fully online meeting from 14 to 19 December 2020 with one three-hour session per day (3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Paris time) and renews its recommendation to the Committee to adopt a provisional agenda for that session with fewer items as contained in annex 3 of the document [15.COM 3.BUR 4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-15.COM_3.BUR-4-EN.docx).

**Annex: Results of the electronic consultation with the members of the Committee**

| **Committee Members** | **Preference** |
| --- | --- |
| Group I | |
| Netherlands | Online[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Sweden | Online |
| Switzerland | Online[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Group II | |
| Azerbaijan | Online |
| Czechia | Online |
| Poland | Online[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Group III | |
| Brazil | Online |
| Jamaica | Online[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Panama | Online[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Peru | Postponement to 2021 |
| Group IV | |
| China | Postponement to 2021[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Japan | Online |
| Kazakhstan | Postponement to 2021 |
| Republic of Korea | Online[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Sri Lanka | Online[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Group V(a) | |
| Botswana | Online[[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Cameroon | Online[[10]](#endnote-10) |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Online |
| Djibouti | Online[[11]](#endnote-11) |
| Rwanda | Online |
| Togo | Online |
| Group V(b) | |
| Kuwait | Online |
| Morocco | Postponement to 2021[[12]](#endnote-12) |
| Saudi Arabia | Online |

1. . **Netherlands**: The Netherlands prefers an online meeting because we wish to comply to our obligations and responsibilities, not in the least towards the extensive network of communities that are awaiting confirmation on their nomination files. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. . **Switzerland**: We believe that it is necessary for the Committee to meet this year in order to carry out its statutory tasks and we invite the Bureau to adapt the agenda to these new online meeting modalities. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. . **Poland**: 2 questions to ask:

   * How the elections to Evaluation Body will be organised?

   How the discussion regarding the nomination process would look like? [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. . **Jamaica**: The Session should include an adjusted agenda, that would allow for nomination files that are recommended for a referral to be able to engage in further discussion as needed at a later date. Those files recommended for an inscription could be addressed within the 15.COM if held virtually. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. . **Panama**: Regarding the options for the next Committee meeting our authorities preferred to have a virtual meeting in December but a shorter one. Probably the most urgent matters could be dealt with in December and those not necessarily urgent could be left for sometime in 2021. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. . **China**: Although fully online meeting can be held without being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to conduct a full debate in an online way. Participants' interventions and debates as well as consultations cannot be secured and ensured due to different technical problems among countries. Our recent experiences explain this problem a lot. The sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee are very important. In order to ensure that all members of the Committee can participate on equal terms and can effectively perform their duties and obligations through adequate debate and interactions without the constraints of technical problems, it is highly recommended and preferred to postpone this session till members of the Committee could be physically present in the meeting room, in a semi-presential and semi-virtual way. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. . **Republic of Korea**: We wish that the proposed meeting time (3p.m.-6p.m.) be adjusted to an earlier time, given that 3pm-6pm is after midnight in Asian (Korea, China, Japan) time. We understand that because of time differences it is hard to meet every country's convenience. Morning time would be the best for Asia, but inconvenient for Latin American region. In this sense, taking into consideration diverse time differences, we would like to suggest 1p.m.-4p.m. or 12p.m.-3p.m. as alternatives. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. . **Sri Lanka**: Fully online with a good online connection. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. . **Botswana**: Botswana is of the view that the meeting be held online since there is no guarantee that the situation with COVID-19 will normalize any time sooner. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. . **Cameroon**: The postponement to 2021 could have a significant impact on the nomination process. This could be detrimental to members States that have invested so much and set an agenda for the inscription of their elements for the year 2020. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. . **Djibouti**: The Permanent Delegation of Djibouti to UNESCO would like to have more detailed information on the practical modalities for the holding of the session, in particular concerning the inscription of elements on the list of intangible heritage. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. . **Morocco**: We prefer to postpone the 15th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to 2021. This postponement will make it possible to envisage a face-to-face meeting; to better prepare for this important session and to encourage the participation of experts from the different Member States of the Committee. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)