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

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

**Eighteenth session**

**Kasane, Republic of Botswana**

**4 to 9 December 2023**

**Summary records of the meeting of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation**

**of Article 18 of the Convention**

*The summary records have been drafted based on the transcript of the statements made by the participants during the seventeenth session of the Committee. The text of this document does not imply the expression of any position whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.*

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL   
WORKING GROUP MEETING**

*[Tuesday, 4 July 2023, morning session]*

**ITEM 1**

**AGENDA AND TIMETABLE**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/1 Rev.3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-1_REV_3_EN.docx)

1. The **Secretary of the Convention** (Mr Tim Curtis) welcomed the participants to the meeting of the Open‑ended intergovernmental working group in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter the ‘working group’). He reminded participants that the meeting was taking place in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the 2003 Convention, a year which would provide an opportunity for stakeholders to take stock of the impacts of the 2003 Convention and reflect on the Convention’s future direction. The Secretary thanked Sweden for financially supporting the reflection process. The purpose of this working group was to make a set of recommendations on the reflection topics for the attention of the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee (hereinafter the ‘Committee’) that would take place in Kasane, Republic of Botswana, later in 2023. The working group’s recommendations would determine how the Convention could creatively and successfully highlight and utilize the safeguarding experiences of communities around the world. The Secretary encouraged participants to propose practical and pragmatic ways forward while addressing broader issues on how to better elevate the voices of communities and their aspirations for safeguarding their living heritage.
2. Ms Fumiko Ohinata of **the Secretariat** informed participants that the seating arrangements had been made according to the French alphabetical order of States Parties which were registered for this meeting, and that the order started with the letter ‘N’, which was picked by the seventeenth session of the Committee in December 2022. As this was an in‑person meeting, States Parties and observers would not be able to intervene online. However, the meeting would be broadcast in real time on the Convention’s dedicated [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/article-18-open-ended-intergovernmental-working-group-01307). She reminded participants that the group’s working languages were English and French, and that the working documents in both languages had been available since 14 June. Clerical revisions had been made since then to working documents [1 Rev.3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-1_REV_3_EN.docx) and [3 Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx) Participants could refer to the 2022 edition of the [Basic Texts](https://ich.unesco.org/en/basic-texts-00503), which were available in all six UN languages, and which included amendments adopted by the ninth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties. She reminded participants that only States Parties could propose amendments and could do so orally, by taking the floor, or via email to [ICH-amendments@unesco.org](mailto:ICH-amendments@unesco.org).
3. The **Secretary** said the first order of business was to elect members of the Bureau, starting with a chairperson.
4. The **delegation of Switzerland** proposed Mr Martin Sundin, Director General of the Institute of Language and Folklore (Sweden), for the chairpersonship of the working group. The delegation of Botswana seconded the proposal by the delegation of Switzerland. The participants agreed by acclamation that Mr Martin Sundin would serve as Chairperson, and the Secretary invited him to take place on the podium.
5. The **Chairperson of the working group, Mr Martin Sundin,** thanked the working group for its trust and shared his intention to achieve concrete and constructive outcomes through the discussions that would take place over the following days. The working group should elect a team of Vice‑chairpersons who would also double as Rapporteurs. One Vice-chairperson would be selected from each electoral group, to build a consensus based on geographical balance. Group I was excluded, since the Chairperson was representing that group. Members of the Bureau would prepare draft recommendations to be presented in the plenary session on the last day of the meeting. This approach would hopefully avoid lengthy discussions around wording and punctuation, and allow the working group to focus on the essential. The Chairperson then proceeded to the election of the Vice‑chairpersons.
6. The **delegation of Czechia** proposed Estonia for the position of Vice‑chairperson for Electoral Group II. The **delegation of Guatemala** proposed Peru for the position of Vice‑chairperson for Electoral Group III. The **delegation of Botswana** nominated Angola for the position of Vice‑chairperson for Electoral Group V(a). The **delegation of Japan** proposed the Philippines for the position of Vice‑chairperson for Electoral Group IV. The **delegation of** **Morocco** proposed to become Vice-chairperson for Electoral Group V(b).
7. The **Chairperson** thanked participants for their cooperation and for setting up the Bureau of the working group so smoothly.

**ITEM 2**

**A NEW REFLECTION ON A BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION: PROGRESS TO DATE AND MEETING OBJECTIVES**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-2_EN.docx)

1. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretary to clarify the objectives of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18, as well as the current status of this multi‑year process.
2. The **Secretary** invited participants to refer to [working document 2](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-2_EN.docx) for the background details. The purpose of Article 18 related to the selection and sharing of programmes, projects and activities for living heritage safeguarding, and it was implemented through the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. However, while Article 16 and Article 17 referred to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (hereinafter ‘the Representative List’) and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereinafter ‘the Urgent Safeguarding List’), Article 18 did not refer to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (hereinafter ‘the Register’). This Register became operational in 2009, and its functioning had been developed in the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf). Although it was innovative, it had been underutilized compared to the other two Lists. To date, the Committee had inscribed 676 living heritage elements, practised in 140 countries. The Representative List contained 567 of those elements (88.88 per cent), the Urgent Safeguarding List contained 76 elements (11.24 per cent), and the Register included only 33 good practices (4.88 per cent). The Secretary noted that there appeared to be two issues affecting the use of the Register. The first issue was that the selected programmes, projects and activities were not balanced across regions. Over half of the selected programmes came from Electoral Groups I and II, while Electoral Groups V(a) and V(b) were significantly underrepresented. Paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives advocated for an equitable geographic distribution, and the non‑observance of this principle was a concern. The second issue was that States Parties had rarely used the Convention’s International Assistance mechanism, which included preparatory assistance for submissions. Out of the twenty-seven requests for preparatory assistance that had been granted so far, only four had been used for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Article 7(b) of the Convention, supported by paragraphs 42 to 46 of the Operational Directives, entrusted the Committee with the responsibility of providing guidance and making recommendations around safeguarding practices. When it was noted that the Register was not working as it should, attempts were made to develop ‘alternate and lighter ways’ to share good safeguarding practices. To that end, the Secretariat had conducted a survey among the stakeholders of the Convention. The main finding was a preference to keep the Register, but with lighter filtering and validation mechanisms. The survey results were presented to the Committee at its fourteenth session in 2019, and the Committee decided to take the outcomes into consideration in the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, which had been ongoing since 2018 and concluded with the General Assembly in 2022. Given that the new reflection on Article 18 was initiated through the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, it was important to note what happened subsequently, in particular two concrete outcomes relevant to Article 18. The first outcome was that criterion P.9 was deleted because it was considered that it offered no clarity regarding how to evaluate the needs of developing countries and because it gave the misguided impression that developed countries could provide good examples to developing countries but not vice versa. The second outcome was a new possibility for the Evaluation Body to identify successful safeguarding practices while evaluating requests for elements to be transferred from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List (new paragraph 39.3 of the Operational Directives). As this new way of working with the Register had not yet been tested, it would take a few years to see how it developed. Finally, the Committee’s [Decision 16.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/16.COM/14) had initiated a separate reflection to explore ways to implement Article 18 more broadly, and that was the purpose of this working group. The Secretary thanked Sweden for making two rounds of additional contributions to the Regular Programme of UNESCO, thereby making this reflection possible. The initiative was further financially supported by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The reflection topics for this working group, established by the seventeenth session of the Committee, were as follows: (a) ‘Topic 1: Improving the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’; (b) ‘Topic 2: Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing safeguarding practices’; and (c) ‘Topic 3: Any other issues’. The groundwork for discussions had been laid during a Category VI meeting of experts which took place between 19 and 21 April 2023 in Stockholm, Sweden. The next step in these intergovernmental discussions would take place at the eighteenth session of the Committee. If needed, the progress of the reflection would be presented to the tenth session of the General Assembly. The Secretary reminded participants that the Bureau would meet daily and prepare the draft recommendations with the Secretariat’s support. He invited States Parties to propose amendments by 10 a.m. on the third day to enable draft recommendations to be prepared and circulated.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for the presentation and opened the floor for questions. In the absence of any interventions, he passed the floor to the Secretariat to provide more details about the Category VI meeting of experts.
4. Ms Fumiko Ohinata of **the Secretariat** thanked the Chairperson for the floor and recalled that the aim of the expert meeting had been to put forward proposals and recommendations to the working group. The meeting had gathered twenty-one experts in the field of living heritage safeguarding, which had been selected taking into account gender and geographical balance. The set of recommendations they adopted were presented in document [LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx). The recommendations included three considerations that the experts wished to highlight. The first consideration was about the importance of placing communities, groups and individuals at the centre of safeguarding efforts and of bearing in mind their interests when setting up a system to share their safeguarding experiences. The second consideration was about the need to select a larger number of good safeguarding practices, because there were currently only thirty-three selected practices on the Register, which did not provide a sufficient basis of experiences to be consulted. The third consideration was an encouragement to implement Article 18 broadly in conjunction with the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), the [Overall Results Framework](https://ich.unesco.org/en/overall-results-framework-00984), the [Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866), and the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention, such as International Assistance and the listing system of the Convention.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the well-explained presentation and gave the floor to the first of three experts who had facilitated the discussion of the expert meeting.
6. **Ms Cristina Amescua** **of the** **National University of Mexico** thanked the Chairperson and said it was a pleasure to address the working group. She recalled that the experts had agreed that the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices directly reflected the actions of communities and had the potential to serve as a tool for capacity building and for multiplying the safeguarding efforts of such communities. In order to fully achieve the spirit of Article 18, the experts had identified two important points for consideration. The first point was the need to separate the Register from the nomination process. This would avoid competition with nominations to the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List. In that regard, the experts felt that it was necessary to find lighter ways of evaluating the nominations to the Register. The second point was to encourage States Parties to use International Assistance to prepare, implement and follow up on proposals of programmes, projects and activities to be included in the Register, as well as to find ways to finance safeguarding projects that were not on the Register. On the topic of selection criteria, the experts felt that they could be revised, keeping in mind that community participation was a fundamental requirement. There needed to be a clearer focus on the description of programmes, projects or activities in the sense of Article 2.3 of the [Convention](https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention), which defines safeguarding. The working group could consider referring to safeguarding measures in the principles and objectives of the Convention, the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), and the [Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866). While it was important to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programmes, projects or activities, carrying out an assessment of the results was redundant given the current criteria. Using good safeguarding practice models should not be limited to the international level, because some experiences at the local and national level may be relevant. Furthermore, the deletion of criterion P.9 did not mean that the needs of developing countries were not important. Indeed, safeguarding practices may be relevant to a specific context, including but not limited to the needs of developing countries. Therefore, the experts suggested an intergovernmental discussion on the continued relevance of paragraph 6 of the Operational Directives and possible amendments, including the potential for cooperation when implementing Article 18. In order to promote the understanding and application of various safeguarding approaches, the experts recommended presenting safeguarding practices in a searchable and accessible way. [Form ICH‑03](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) could be revised to include questions that facilitated the characterization of safeguarding approaches and their effectiveness, taking into account thematic areas and assessment factors. Other recommendations included finding alternative ways of identifying good safeguarding practices, such as using the periodic reports or nomination files to extract relevant programmes, projects or activities, and encouraging the involvement of accredited non‑governmental organizations (hereinafter ‘NGOs’) for preparing proposals, as well as creating guidelines and capacity‑building materials. The experts also discussed a series of follow‑up actions, such as revising the periodic reporting [Form ICH‑10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) and asking communities to periodically provide information and confirm their sustained consent with the safeguarding situation after completion of the selection process. States Parties could create national registers to indicate whether safeguarding measures of elements already inscribed on the Representative List might be considered as good safeguarding practices. These national registers could also describe safeguarding practices not yet listed in the Register, provide access to those who want to learn directly from safeguarding experiences, as well as indicate where practices are no longer active, or practices for which communities concerned cannot be contacted but which still serve as good examples of safeguarding. Finally, the experts discussed how the Committee could encourage research, documentation, publication and dissemination of good practices and models. One suggestion was to review the application of paragraphs 42 to 46 of the Operational Directives and Article 7.b of the Convention in the context of the application of Article 18. The experts acknowledged the great efforts that had been made so far and noted that the improved implementation of Article 18 would have a positive impact on communities and stakeholders wishing to share what they know and benefit from others’ safeguarding experiences.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked Ms Amescua for her enlightening presentation and gave the floor to Ms Anita Vaivade.
8. **Ms Anita Vaivade** **of the Latvian Academy of Culture** thanked the Chairperson for allowing her to share her comments on the outcomes of the Expert meeting, particularly for discussions around ‘Topic 2: Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences’, which she had moderated. She thanked Sweden for providing the opportunity for reflection and the Secretariat for assisting in the process. The experts’ discussions were focused around strengthening and highlighting the Register while striving for its broader use and considering the possibility of going beyond the Register to enhance dialogue between the various stakeholders and promote a truly international exchange across all regions. A proposal to develop an online platform for such a dialogue was discussed, also noting the need to strengthen capacities to use the technologies. The platform would need to be built while taking into account accessibility, user‑friendliness, and the needs of all stakeholders, for example the option to use one’s mother tongue. The online platform would bring together the richness of competencies and experiences across the wide variety of stakeholders involved in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, from communities to NGOs, category 2 centres, UNESCO Chairs, researchers, country focal points for periodic reporting, and others. It would also foster stronger collaboration and safeguarding initiatives. The experts concluded that such a platform required that individual and collective rights, such as human rights, be respected, protected and fulfilled. In terms of practical application, an online platform could complement international cooperation mechanisms already in use within the Convention. It could be used to disseminate the extensive scope of information, as well as to complement periodic reports to assess the impact of the Convention and of safeguarding practices on sustainable development. The online platform could also pay special attention to the needs of developing countries and global priorities such as protecting the language and culture of indigenous peoples. It could serve to address key issues around safeguarding in emergency situations. The expert meeting noted the importance of the reflection on Article 18, and that this meeting was a valuable opportunity to respond to the need to provide new possibilities for communities and other stakeholders to exchange experiences on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Ms Vaivade wished the working group fruitful debates during their discussions around new possibilities for sharing safeguarding experiences.
9. The **Chairperson** thanked Ms Vaivade for her excellent presentation and gave the floor to Ms Norah Alkhamis.
10. **Ms Norah Alkhamis** **of the Heritage Commission of Saudi Arabia** had moderated the experts’ discussions around ‘Topic 3: Any other issues’. Two main questions had been identified. Question 1 was *what solutions could be envisaged to improve access to financial assistance for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices?* Question 2 was *what other issues may be pertinent for tapping the full potential of Article 18?* Under Question 1, experts discussed how to encourage the use of the Convention’s International Assistance mechanisms. Surveys on good practices at a national level could allow States Parties to identify practices that should be registered and those to be supported through International Assistance. The surveys could also be used to understand how States Parties select good practices and apply for International Assistance. Making alternative resources available for good safeguarding practices would support a broader implementation of Article 18. Under Question 2, experts discussed how to raise awareness of the importance of sharing good safeguarding practices and how to increase the visibility of the Register itself. In that regard, several possibilities were discussed. One was the establishment of specific good safeguarding practice days, or even year‑long commitments at the national level, such as the ‘year of good safeguarding practices’. Prizes or awards could be used to raise awareness of good safeguarding practices. These prizes would not have a monetary value but instead offer various opportunities for such experiences to be widely recognized. Other ideas included the use of certificates, symbols or an emblem. Using the capacities of stakeholders – such as the UNESCO regional offices, category 2 centres, accredited NGOs and the ICH NGO Forum – could help promote and actively support good safeguarding practices, as those stakeholders were in a position to identify good practices. The experts noted that in some regions, more capacity was needed to develop good proposals and requests to the Register, and that improving communication between States Parties and actors would enhance collaboration.
11. The **Chairperson** thanked Ms Alkhamis for her excellent presentation and opened the floor for questions about the expert consultation phase of the reflection. As there were no interventions, he gave the floor to the Secretary to introduce Item 3.

**ITEM 3**

**HOW TO SHARE GOOD LIVING HERITAGE SAFEGUARDING EXPERIENCES MORE BROADLY**

**Documents:**[*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/3 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx)

[*LHE/23/EXP ART18/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)

1. The **Secretary** asked participants to refer to [document 3 Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx), which proposed three topics to be discussed, and to the report of the Category VI expert meeting ([LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)). For Topic 1, he invited participants to reflect on ways to improve the use of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, in terms of its accessibility and visibility, focusing debates around three discussion points: (a) the selection criteria for the Register; (b) ways to increase the accessibility and visibility of the Register; and (c) the Register in relation to other international cooperation mechanisms of the 2003 Convention. For Topic 2, participants should reflect on the four discussion points linked to the proposed creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding practices. These discussion points were: (a) the pertinence of an online platform; (b) the objectives of the platform; (c) practical considerations and how the platform would be run; and (d) the operational implications of such a platform. For Topic 3, participants should reflect on the other issues raised by the meeting of experts, including additional finance resources and specific initiatives aimed at raising awareness of Article 18.
2. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary and the Secretariat for the concise way this wide variety of discussion points had been put together. He suggested opening the floor for a general discussion, followed by an examination of the topics and discussion points one by one, with around ninety minutes for each point. Noting that participants had so far kept remarks concise and pertinent, he suggested a two‑minute cap on interventions. He gave the floor to Belgium to open the debate.
3. The **delegation of Belgium** congratulated the Chairperson on his election. With regards to the first report (see paragraph 13), it was important to keep in mind the plea made in paragraph 3 of the expert meeting report ([LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)) to consider Article 18 not only with Articles 16 and 17, but also 19 and 24, in order to move beyond discussing Lists and to focus on international cooperation. As a second point, the delegation noted that paragraph 4 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) had not been fully activated until now. The paragraph stated: ‘At each session the Committee may explicitly call for proposals characterized by international cooperation, as mentioned in Article 19 of the Convention, and/or focusing on specific priority aspects of safeguarding’. The working group should take this opportunity to link their discussion to newer instruments such as the [Ethical Principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866), the [Overall Results Framework](https://ich.unesco.org/en/overall-results-framework-00984), and the system of [periodic reporting](https://ich.unesco.org/en/periodic-reporting-00460). He recalled paragraph 9.c of the Operational Directives, which had also not been strongly activated and which encouraged the Committee to support programmes, projects and activities aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at a national, regional and subregional level. As a third point, the delegation suggested a house‑keeping mechanism to manage changes around sustained consent of communities, groups and individuals, as sometimes programmes and institutions disappeared.
4. The **delegation of Austria** expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing the necessary documents, to Sweden for making the reflection possible, and to the panel of experts of the Category VI meeting for their valuable insights. One of the working group’s objectives was to ensure that communities and their active participation are placed at the centre of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The Register should therefore be accessible and visible, and its potential for capacity building and inspiring communities should be enhanced. The three most important issues for discussions were: (a) exploring alternative ways of identifying good safeguarding practices; (b) understanding the relationship between the safeguarding examples listed in the Register and those brought in with a ‘lighter way of sharing’, as well as the relation between the extended Register, the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List; and (c) revising the selection criteria. Regarding the second issue, the delegation emphasized that there should be no competition between the Lists and the Register, and that the mechanisms should be clearly separated. The delegation looked forward to the discussions.
5. The **delegation of Germany** congratulated the Chairperson for his election, thanked Sweden for the working group and reflection process, and thanked the Secretariat and the experts of the Category VI meeting for their invaluable work. Regarding Topic 1, the delegation was in favour of adjusting the criteria and simplifying [Form ICH‑03](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) to promote access for the groups concerned and to improve visibility. An indexing system of good practices would enhance understanding of good safeguarding practices and strengthen international cooperation. The delegation recalled their suggested proposal for [Craft techniques and customary practices of cathedral workshops, or Bauhütten, in Europe, know-how, transmission, development of knowledge and innovation](https://ich.unesco.org/en/BSP/craft-techniques-and-customary-practices-of-cathedral-workshops-or-bauhutten-in-europe-know-how-transmission-development-of-knowledge-and-innovation-01558), inscribed in the Register in 2020, and encouraged the enhanced use of the international cooperation mechanisms. However, including this information in the periodic reports, which were already very comprehensive, could make the reports more cumbersome. The delegation believed the reports should be more efficient and targeted.
6. The **delegation of Brazil** thanked Sweden for supporting the reflection process, noting that this initiative helped move away from the trap of lists. Nominations to the Lists should be viewed as mechanisms to support the objectives of the Convention and not as aims in themselves. The reflection on Article 18 could therefore open new frontiers in terms of developing the Convention. While the main challenge 20 years ago was to improve the visibility of intangible cultural heritage, the challenge now was to think about how intangible cultural heritage could contribute to contemporary issues such as climate change, urban development, social cohesion and multilingualism. The delegation noted that Brazil had contributed with the experts of the meeting held in Stockholm and that the preliminary discussions had been very productive.
7. The **delegation of Mexico** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, thanked Sweden for their support in the reflection of Article 18, and commended the experts for their recommendations, particularly relating to the adjustment of the selection criteria. The delegation felt it was necessary to establish a follow‑up mechanism for inscriptions to the Register, not only to meet the States Parties’ commitments but also to encourage cooperation between the managers of the registered programmes and government agencies. It was crucial to adjust the selection criteria and the format of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), and to create various online consultation and dissemination tools, as it was not possible to safeguard what was not known.
8. The **delegation of Kazakhstan** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, thanked Sweden for generously supporting the discussion on Article 18, and commended the Secretariat for its diligent and useful analysis. The delegation said that Article 18 was crucial for the Convention’s success and agreed that communities should be the focus of the Convention, since they were at the centre of safeguarding practices. However, since most developing countries spoke their own language rather than one of the six official working languages, more had to be done to close the language gap. The delegation considered the issue of this meeting to be very important and looked forward to sharing practical comments and recommendations.
9. The **ICH NGO Forum** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and thanked Sweden for their support. The Forum had conducted a mapping project and identified good safeguarding practices from eighty-five accredited NGOs, most of which were outside Europe and North America. The Forum suggested including one of the findings in these deliberations, namely to think about what safeguarding entailed, because this was at the heart of the matter. This included the presentation of intangible cultural heritage, to give bearers the opportunity to keep a tradition going. It also included documentation and archiving to create a permanent record for present and future generations, an area that needed more attention within the Convention. In addition, it involved practices to use intangible cultural heritage to improve society. As an example, the ICH NGO Forum had found intangible cultural heritage was used in Africa and Central Asia as mediation for domestic violence. Other domains included emergency situations and higher education. These domains would help to categorize good safeguarding practices on the online platform.
10. The **delegation of Saudi Arabia** congratulated Sweden for chairing the session. The delegation supported the experts’ recommendation to consider the Register and the Lists separately, as this would enable States Parties to submit a proposal for the Register and a nomination to one or two of the Lists without having to choose between them. The global reflection on the listing mechanisms had recommended fine‑tuning the setup of the Lists and Register rather than changing it drastically. The delegation proposed the consideration of that recommendation in the future.

**TOPIC 1: IMPROVING THE ACCESS TO AND INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE REGISTER OF GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/3 Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx)*.*

1. The **Secretary** thanked the delegations for their interventions and introduced Topic 1. He reminded the working group that since its operationalization in 2009, the Register had not reached its full potential as a tool for supporting and enriching safeguarding efforts. Many discussions had been held around adjusting the existing selection criteria (see paragraph 7 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf)), with one concrete outcome being the deletion of criterion P.9. The Open‑ended working group in the framework of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms had recommended that States Parties discuss further adjustments to the selection criteria, particularly to make it lighter and less bureaucratic. The proposals included the merging of criteria P.1 and P.3, meaning submitting States would have one less criterion to fill. The second recommendation was the deletion of criterion P.2, because this criterion may unnecessarily limit the diversity of the Register. Criterion P.4 should be kept because it demonstrated the effectiveness of the programme. Criterion P.5 should also be kept, because community participation should remain an important requirement for selection, and should reference [Ethical Principle 4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention-Ethical_principles-EN.docx) on the free, prior, sustained and informed consent of communities. Criterion P.6 could be deleted because the reference to possibly using the selected good practice as a model could be included in the combined criteria P.1 and P.3. Another option, if criterion P.6 was kept, was to broaden it to include national and local levels rather than only regional, subregional or international levels. Criterion P.7 could be adjusted to refer to ‘good practices’ instead of ‘best practices’. Criterion P.8 could be deleted, as the requirement for assessing the results of a selected programme may be redundant because those results would be referred to in the revised criterion P.4. The working group could request that the Secretariat draft these amendments to be examined by the eighteenth session of the Committee. The Committee could decide to bring these amendments to the attention of the tenth session of the General Assembly. Following that, [Form ICH‑03](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) could be adjusted in the second half of 2024 and be made available for the examination of proposals to the Register in the 2026 cycle.

**Discussion point 1: Adjustments to the selection criteria**

1. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary and opened the floor for discussion.
2. The **delegation of Switzerland** congratulated the Chairperson on his election. The cooperation aspect was important, as well as the multinational or regional aspect. Concerning the proposed deletion of criterion P.2 and its combination with criteria P.1, P.3 and P.6, the delegation suggested the Secretariat could include an encouragement to cooperation, as with the example given by the delegation of Germany for the [Craft techniques and customary practices of cathedral workshops, or Bauhütten, in Europe, know-how, transmission, development of knowledge and innovation](https://ich.unesco.org/en/BSP/craft-techniques-and-customary-practices-of-cathedral-workshops-or-bauhutten-in-europe-know-how-transmission-development-of-knowledge-and-innovation-01558), which was a multinational element on the Register.
3. The **delegation of Estonia** congratulated the Chairperson on his election. The delegation believed the interest of States Parties in submitting more proposals was linked to the existing competition between the Lists and the Register. As such, the delegation supported the recommendations of the expert meeting to merge criteria P.1 with P.3 and delete P.2 and P.8.
4. The **Secretary** asked for clarity around whether the delegation of Switzerland was suggesting criterion P.2 be kept or whether international cooperation could be reflected elsewhere. A new criterion P.1 could reflect cooperation at a regional and international level.
5. The **delegation of Belgium** supported the proposals made by the expert group but expressed its preference for the working group to go over the proposed amendments one by one, to see the changes.
6. The **Chairperson** said the working group would see the changes, but this was a more general debate on propositions made.
7. The **Secretary** confirmed that this was not the forum for adopting revisions. Some work had been done on possible amendments to criteria, but recommendations from the working group would first need to go to the Committee, and a decision would only be made by the Committee for submission to the General Assembly in the event of actual revisions to the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), which would also need to be checked by the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs. The Secretary then read the possible revisions on screen. The first draft for criterion P.1 was still a little vague, but could read ‘The programme, project or activity involves safeguarding, as defined in Article 2.3 of the Convention, reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention. They may serve as a model for safeguarding activities.’ As suggested by the delegation of Switzerland, a reference relating to fostering cooperation and coordination could be added there. Criterion P.2 was to be deleted. Criterion P.3 would also be deleted because it would be merged with criterion P.1. Criteria P.4 and P.5 would remain. Criterion P.6 could be merged with criterion P.1, which could answer the concern voiced by the delegation of Switzerland; the wording of criterion P.1 may need to be changed to capture that. Criterion P.7 would be edited to replace ‘best’ with ‘good’. Criterion P.8 would be deleted.
8. The **delegation of Switzerland** suggested that the new version of criterion P.1 could include an addition after ‘serve as a model for safeguarding activities’: ‘in the spirit of promoting cooperation’ which echoed criterion P.2, ‘and promoting regional cooperation’ which echoed criterion P.9.
9. The **Secretary** felt the experts were suggesting that the international dimension should not be a requirement, and that adding ‘and’ would make it a requirement, as it would be interpreted as ‘it must also’. The **Secretariat** made note of the comment and would work on the wording.
10. The **delegation of Belgium** said the proposal by the delegation of Switzerland to include cooperation may not be necessary, and referred to paragraph 4 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) which already called for proposals that support and stimulate cooperation. However, there had to be a strong recommendation for this elsewhere. The delegation then mentioned that the wording ‘that best satisfy all the following criteria’, found before criterion P.1, left room for manoeuvring. This may be useful, but it would be stronger if all criteria were satisfied. The delegation suggested the wording be strengthened to encourage all four criteria be met.
11. The **Secretary** noted the issue raised by the delegation of Belgium. It was not necessary for submissions to the Register to satisfy all criteria, whereas for the other Lists it was necessary to satisfy all five criteria. If the number of criteria was reduced to four, the Committee could discuss whether submissions would have to satisfy all four criteria, or whether some flexibility could be kept. The Secretary welcomed thoughts on that issue.
12. The **delegation of Peru** felt these criteria were conceived to highlight the regional, subregional and international levels, and that it would be important to include the local level. While the local level may not have as much visibility as the national level, it was still important for local communities. The delegation suggested the inclusion of the word ‘local’, perhaps under criterion P.6.
13. The **delegation of Austria** supported the reduction of the number of criteria, as suggested by the expert group, as well as the suggestion by the delegation of Belgium to delete the word ‘best’. The delegation looked forward to a better formulation for criterion P.1, per the comment by the delegation of Switzerland.
14. The **delegation of Czechia** said the text should be kept with the word ‘best’. The delegation supported the expert proposal to simplify and reduce the number of criteria, but said removing the flexibility in the introductory phase would make file submissions more difficult.
15. The **Chairperson** requested a consensus be found around that wording.
16. The **delegation of Norway** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and thanked Sweden. The delegation supported the simplification but did not see the use of changing the introductory sentence of the paragraph; the wording could remain the same.
17. The **delegation of Belgium** said the concern was around credibility. If the proposals were not about safeguarding or had no community involvement or consent, how credible was a Register that contained such good practices? These were minimal requirements. The proposals to the Register had to include safeguarding, community involvement and consent.
18. The **delegation of Czechia** approved the proposal made by the delegation of Norway. It understood that even now, the request was for nominations to meet all criteria. The current wording should also work with the simplified criteria. The delegation said it would follow the consensus.
19. The **Secretary** recalled that when the criteria for the Lists were first set up, it was decided that the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List would have a small number of compulsory criteria, while the Register would have a larger number of criteria that did not all have to be satisfied. The reduction of criteria raised the question of whether they would be compulsory or not, and this question needed to be further debated. He asked for inputs from members who had served on the Evaluation Body.
20. The representative fromthe **ICH NGO Forum** had been part of the Evaluation Body. He said that applying the words ‘they may serve as a model’ to an evaluation could be ambiguous, and therefore changes needed to be made to the last sentence of criterion P.1.
21. The **Chairperson** asked the ICH NGO Forum how it used the different criteria when it came to using ‘best’. *How important was that when going through each nomination?*
22. The **ICH NGO Forum** said ‘they may serve’ was not easy to evaluate. In its opinion, it was not really a criterion.
23. The **delegation of Slovakia** congratulated the Chairperson for the effective way he was leading the work, and thanked Sweden for enabling the discussions, the group of experts for their discussions and the Secretariat for its tremendous support. As a former member of the Evaluation Body, she looked at all criteria for the Lists, not the Register. The question of whether criteria should be considered obligatory or not was a crucial question for the future. Perhaps the deletion and merging of some criteria was causing confusion. *Should the criteria be merged? Was the working group asking States Parties to do the same work but in a more complicated way?*
24. The accredited NGO ‘**Workshop Intangible Heritage Flanders**’ wanted to address the sentence ‘may serve as a model’. One of the issues to reflect on was, in relation to the future of Article 18, whether the focus was around models or inspiration. A model was a strong approach, but maybe not the best one to foster a creative use of experiences from all over the world.
25. The **delegation of Brazil** supported the simplification of criteria and asked for data on the success rate of proposals to the Register, including the breakdown of which criteria had been successful, as this could help when discussing simplification.
26. The **Secretary** agreed and said this could be ready later in the evening. He was hesitant to discuss the wording because it was in a way pre‑empting the discussions of the Committee and General Assembly. However, the discussions so far had been helpful to understand what may emerge. The request from Brazil could be put into the report and could be discussed again once recommendations had been formulated.

**Discussion point 2: Accessibility to and visibility of the Register**

1. The **Secretary** introduced the second discussion point under Topic 1. The Register had not fully served as a source of inspiration for communities and stakeholders seeking advice on safeguarding living heritage. This was partly because the low number of programmes, projects and activities did not offer a sufficiently broad range of safeguarding issues and contexts. This could be addressed in several ways. The idea of separating the Register from the Lists and setting up a new, parallel mechanism had been debated and intensely negotiated, and would impinge on what was discussed in the working group. There were concerns around the feasibility and realism of that proposal. Article 18 had to be understood in relation to the broader Convention. An interesting proposal from the expert group was the introduction of an indexing system, which could enable stakeholders to access, research, understand and apply various safeguarding approaches. This proposal was feasible and could contribute to the discussion on Topic 2 (Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences).
2. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for discussion on discussion point 2.
3. The **delegation of Latvia** thanked the Chairperson and Sweden for supporting the reflection process. The delegation encouraged States Parties to create registers of good safeguarding practices at the national level, as these could also raise awareness of the importance of sharing experiences and encourage proposal submissions at the international level. The purpose of raising awareness and sharing information about national inventories should also be presented on the online platform.
4. The **delegation of China** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and emphasized the importance of the Register being examined separately from the other two Lists. The delegation agreed with the recommendation of the expert meeting.
5. The **delegation of Belgium** felt the housekeeping issue was an important point for discussion. The Register included several files that no longer existed. It would be helpful to see whether the information provided on the Register was still current. There could be an evaluation, as well as an elegant removal of practices. Regarding discussion point 1, the delegation felt the work was not quite finished and referred to paragraph 8(c) in the [document 3 Rev.](file:///\\hqfs\OurDrive\CLT\ProgrammeExecution\2003Convention\2003-StatutoryMeetings\2023\2023-07_OEIWG%20Article%2018\Documents\WG_ART18_3_REV%20Three%20reflection%20topics_EN.docx), which mentioned trying to describe a submission before it begins and after it has been executed. The delegation asked for a discussion around housekeeping of the Register and distinguishing between active and inactive programmes.
6. The **ICH NGO Forum** supported the comments from the delegation of Kazakhstan regarding languages. Less than 5 per cent of the population in Latin America spoke English or French, the languages of the Register. Something needed to be done to improve that matter.
7. The **Secretary** recalled that a decision had been made that all nominations to the Register would be made available online in English and French, as well as the original language of the submission. It was not possible to translate all the languages in the world, but the submissions would be available in the original language, with a disclaimer that this was not UNESCO‑verified content, so communities could access them. This would begin happening as of this year.

**Discussion point 3: Relation of the Register with other international cooperation mechanisms of the 2003 Convention**

1. The **Chairperson** opened the discussion on point 3. Increased access to and visibility of the Register could be achieved through the promotion of activities focusing on capacity building, experience sharing and awareness raising. Proposal preparations to the Register could be supported by accredited NGOs and community representatives, complemented by capacity-building materials. One approach was to co‑finance the preparation, implementation and follow‑up of proposals to the Register. Paragraph 2 of Article 18 and paragraphs 21‑23 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) stated that States Parties could request financial assistance, but this had not often been used, and it remained underused for the purposes of Article 18. The working group could reflect on the usefulness of setting up a follow‑up and monitoring system for the Register in order to learn about post‑selection experiences. It could also reflect on how this could be integrated into the periodic reporting framework, while being cautious not to make the system heavier. One option would be to engage researchers to pursue those endeavours. Periodic reporting mechanisms and [Form ICH‑10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) could be revised to encourage States Parties to give updates on actions undertaken in the implementation of Article 18.
2. The **delegation of Belgium** referred to paragraph 9(c) of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) that enabled the Committee to approve financing for activities carried out under Article 18 and that had not been strongly used. An avenue to explore might be a system of co‑financing or international projects. States Parties were submitting substantial periodic reports which yielded a lot of information. An analysis of those reports could be conducted to see what kind of safeguarding projects were needed, for example relating to sustainable development. This would be a way of activating paragraph 4 of the Operational Directives where the Committee could call for programmes and projects around specific priorities or proposals for international cooperation. It would be useful to link the Overall Results Framework to the periodic reporting and then call for examples to be submitted to the Register. In this way, the Committee would invite countries and stakeholders to propose something.
3. The **delegation of Latvia** expressed its support to find space for sharing post‑selection experiences concerning selected safeguarding practices and their impact after selection.
4. The **delegation of** **Brunei Darussalam** agreed with the recommendations made by the expert working group. Regarding discussion point 2 (Ways to increase accessibility and visibility of the Register), the Register had helped them to learn processes and good safeguarding practices. Regarding discussion point 3 (Relation of the Register with other international cooperation mechanisms of the 2003 Convention), the delegation recalled that they were also a member of the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN), which had signed a cooperation agreement with UNESCO in 2013. They proposed tapping into the existing Memoranda of Understanding within UNESCO and other international cooperation mechanisms.
5. The **Secretary** said there was no problem in principle with looking at existing frameworks and Memoranda of Understanding to include good safeguarding practices. He acknowledged the desire, interest and usefulness of having follow‑up mechanisms relate to periodic reporting, but said it may be wise to wait on the reflection year, once the periodic reports had been done across the world. This was an ongoing process. In 2022 UNESCO had worked with all Arab States; in 2023 they were working with African States, and 2024 would be Asia and the Pacific. UNESCO was working towards joint reporting across all the Conventions, but it was important to consider how this impacted overall reporting because the Secretariat had received many complaints on the heaviness and volume of the reporting. The reflection year on reporting may be a better time to look at how to adjust this.
6. The **delegation of Belgium** took the Secretary’s points into consideration but felt the year should be used for action and to connect to Article 18, not just for reflection, otherwise another five years would be lost. During the reflection year proposals would be considered, and the best ones could be identified. The reflection year could also be used to introduce things that were not addressed. How to fully activate the Overall Results Framework had not been thought about yet, and these proposals could help activate it and make this a year of both reflection and action.
7. The **delegation of Brazil** said the follow‑up mechanisms on good safeguarding practices linked with the question by the delegation of Belgium around the length of time that practices were included on the Register. It asked whether only current good practices would be included in the Register and the online platform, or also those which were no longer current. Brazil had two projects on the Register that were no longer active but were still important as a record for future generations and countries that faced the same issues. It would not be possible to have follow‑up mechanisms for items that were no longer current, so a deeper reflection was needed, and perhaps the two items could be discussed together.
8. The **Secretary** said it was part of the working group’s mandate to prioritize what was most important and the sequence in which those issues would be addressed, because there were limits to how much could be done with the current tools.
9. The **Chairperson** closed the morning session.

*[Tuesday, 4 July 2023, afternoon session]*

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed participants back and summarized the main points of the morning session. Three main points had been emphasized. The first was that Article 18 had the potential to be a vital tool in raising awareness of the Convention and safeguarding living heritage. The second was that Article 18 had to be implemented in relation to existing provisions within the frameworks, reporting exercises and mechanisms of the Convention. The third was that communities must take centre stage to inspire and be inspired by the sharing of safeguarding experiences. The working group had followed the advice given in the expert meeting and made concrete proposals. Promoting coordination and cooperation among States Parties and communities through the Register could be integrated into criterion P.1. One suggestion was to move away from models and instead use the Register as a source of inspiration. The importance of sharing experiences at the local level was mentioned. A question was raised about whether the reduced criteria should be mandatory, with some delegations proposing that all criteria should be satisfied, and others being of the opinion it should be kept flexible to support the sharing of good safeguarding practices. Proposed revisions to the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) would be presented by the Secretariat at the eighteenth session of the Committee. Several delegations had proposed that the Register be separated from the listing system to avoid competition with the Lists. This point had been extensively discussed via the global reflection on listing mechanisms, and the working group could encourage the Committee to continue the discussion. The working group had agreed with the proposal to present good safeguarding practices in a searchable way based on indexing in order to improve access to this information. It had suggested that States establish national registers to increase accessibility to and visibility of the Register. The working group had emphasized the use of mother tongues so that communities around the world could directly participate in the sharing of their safeguarding experiences. The global reflection on listing mechanisms had made it possible for States Parties to submit nominations in the original language. The implementation of Article 18 could be better connected with international cooperation mechanisms. States could be encouraged to use International Assistance for preparing requests for the Register. The periodic reporting mechanisms could be adjusted to solicit information on follow‑up and monitoring of programmes included in the Register. However, caution should be taken to avoid overburdening the system. The implementation of Article 18 may be better connected with certain provisions of the [Basic Texts](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf). For example, the Committee could call for proposals characterized by international cooperation and/or focusing on specific priority aspects of safeguarding (under paragraph 4 of the Operational Directives).

**TOPIC 2: TOWARDS THE CREATION OF AN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR SHARING GOOD SAFEGUARDING EXPERIENCES.**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/3 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx)

1. The **Secretary** reminded participants that the idea behind this item was to explore the implementation of Article 18 beyond the Register itself. An online platform would enable communities in different parts of the world to share their good safeguarding experiences. There were four proposed discussion points for the working group to explore. The first was an invitation to debate the objectives of an online platform and how it would enhance dialogue among all stakeholders of the Convention. The second was an invitation to discuss the platform’s objectives. For example: (a) allowing an exchange of information between stakeholders; (b) creating a network of inscribed elements for information sharing after their selection on the Lists or the Register; (c) awareness raising and event promotion relating to the safeguarding of living heritage. The third discussion point was around practical considerations for setting up and running an online platform, particularly the moderation of exchanged information, possibilities of online communication and use of mother tongue, community participation and ethical considerations (see [document 3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx) Rev. for details). The fourth discussion point centred around the administrative setups and the financial and operational implications of the platform. The expert meeting had proposed forming an advisory group composed of members selected by the Committee across stakeholders. The Secretariat had carried out a preliminary analysis and estimated an initial setup cost of USD$300,000 and an annual budget of USD$500,000 for maintenance of the platform.
2. The **ICH NGO Forum** suggested that training modules could also be integrated within the online platform.
3. The **delegation of Belgium** added that, on the question of pertinence, the online platform was needed for sharing and facilitating good safeguarding experiences, as well as fostering collaboration. The platform could be used as a way of connecting communities with specific needs to relevant safeguarding programmes, which could also address paragraph 6 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) around the needs of developing countries. The delegation suggested including indications on the website to show whether a programme was still active and whether the relevant stakeholders from that programme could be contacted. With regards to the budget, the delegation felt it was a clever investment that would yield big profits for all involved.
4. The **delegation of Estonia** stated that, while it advocated for modern IT solutions, many communities had limited capacities in that respect. *How could that situation be reconciled with the aim for an engaged global forum where all communities and relevant stakeholders across the world could communicate?* The main added value of the proposed online platform was its function as a meeting place. Regarding the sustainability of the platform, the delegation felt the costs were considerable, and a sustainable solution may be to gradually grow the platform, starting with the existing resources of the Convention. The working group should make full use of paragraph 4 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), which called for proposals characterized by international cooperation and/or focused on specific priorities. These could be connected to topical issues like climate change.
5. The **delegation of Austria** agreed that the online platform would be a helpful tool to enhance dialogue and exchange information. The delegation supported Step 1, outlined in the proposal. The Convention’s [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/home) could include past and future safeguarding practices, taken from periodic reports and surveys. The policy monitoring platform established by the Secretariat could serve as inspiration, because it displayed nearly 5,000 policies and measures recorded between 2012 and 2022. Regarding indexing, a clear distinction should be made concerning the function and objective of each programme, particularly in relation to finding lighter filtering and validation mechanisms.
6. The **delegation of Brazil** said it was not optimistic about the online platform and foresaw low community engagement. If the online platform was created and moderated by UNESCO, States Parties or NGOs, communities may not feel involved. Communities wanted to use other digital platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. *Might it be a better approach to increase dialogue and visibility of the platforms already being used?* The delegation asked the Secretariat to clarify how communities would be engaged on the online platform.
7. The **delegation of China** supported the creation of an online platform, but with a number of caveats. For one, the platform should only be used to share and exchange good safeguarding practices. It should not play any role in periodic reporting, transfers between the Lists or removal of elements from the Lists. The delegation was in favour of a step‑by‑step approach as suggested by the expert group, starting with a clarification of who would be responsible for monitoring the inscribed elements. The delegation was also in favour of the proposal to create an advisory working group to supervise the creation and operation of the online platform.
8. The **Secretary** addressed the question of gradual approach. No approach was free from costs – whether step by step or a full new platform. Even if the first step was to begin on the Convention’s [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/home), there would be costs involved. The Secretary noted that if the Secretariat started to select which periodic reports were placed on the website and index, it would be seen as UNESCO selecting the practices, instead of the intergovernmental panels. A way around that would be to put all periodic reports on the website and to index them. This would increase visibility of practices already on the Register. A discussion was needed around how to select new practices.
9. The **Secretary** then addressed the question from the delegation of Brazil about community engagement. He recalled that what the experts were suggesting was only the beginning. It would not be possible for the platform to engage with all communities everywhere. However, the platform could include all the communities associated with the 676 elements already inscribed, plus the focal points for periodic report and accredited NGOs, which equated to over 1,000 stakeholders involved in safeguarding living heritage. This may not include all communities, but it was a start.
10. The **delegation of Norway** supported the creation of an online platform, but felt it was important to clarify the platform’s scope in order to ensure its success. With regards to the Secretariat’s question of whether all experiences would be welcome on the platform, perhaps it could highlight suggestions to the Register. Communities, NGOs and the ICH NGO Forum could have an important role in developing the content and the utilization of the online platform.
11. The **delegation of the Netherlands** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and thanked Sweden for organizing the reflection on Article 18. The delegation encouraged the Secretariat to involve communities and NGOs in the process because the platform should be built around their needs. The delegation did not support the name ‘Observatory’ because it echoed notions of monitoring, rather than sharing experiences and facilitating activities.
12. The **delegation of Czechia** supported the experts’ recommendations around the online platform, indexing and a step‑by‑step approach. However, more debate was needed around costs and how to begin. The delegation supported the interventions by the delegations of Estonia and Brazil about the digital gap. With communities being at the core of the Convention, it was important that the online platform centred on sharing good practices and supporting capacity building.
13. The **delegation of Germany** supported the idea of an online platform as a tool to increase dialogue between bearers of intangible cultural heritage. Relating to the objectives of the platform, it could be used to monitor which elements were still active, as proposed by the delegation of Belgium, as well as the success of safeguarding mechanisms. The delegation wondered whether the online platform would be used by stakeholders, given that many of them were in parts of the world without stable internet. Finally, it was not clear to the delegation whether intangible heritage communities needed such a platform, and whether they would use it.
14. The **Secretary** addressed the question by the delegation of Norway (paragraph 81). The very idea of the platform was that it would create a space outside the designated good safeguarding practices, for sharing beyond the Register. However, this raised other questions, as per the interventions by the delegations of the Netherlands, Czechia and Germany. To answer: *how would the communities be involved?* The Convention gathered approximately 200 accredited NGOs and focal points for all of the elements and practices who were directly in touch with communities and could therefore trigger community engagement. To the question of whether communities would be interested in being involved, it was understood that communities whose elements are on the UNESCO Lists would be interested in engaging. This would probably evolve over time. While there may be limits to internet access, the platform would still be a way to bring the existing network of the Convention together.
15. The **Secretary** then addressed the question about monitoring. This issue had already been debated during the open‑ended working group of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and the discussions had concluded that the platform would not monitor elements and fulfil the statutory functions. Instead, to share good safeguarding practices in a lighter and less statutory way, to connect the range of stakeholders who are interested in the Convention.
16. The **delegation of Slovakia** referred to interventions by the delegations of Belgium and Norway (paragraphs 74 and 81) relating to the platform as a tool for communication, and asked whether a new platform was needed. It was necessary to make a distinction between active projects and those that were so successful in safeguarding that they were no longer active. The delegation was in favour of exploring how financial assistance could help communities speak for themselves, as per the intervention by the delegation of Brazil (paragraph 77). The delegation mentioned Slovakia’s own experience of working on their first proposal for the Register, namely the School of Crafts. The communities were eager to share their practices and expected to do so on an international level, something the new platform would enable. The delegation perceived that the connection of nomination files to the Urgent Safeguarding List with the corresponding International Assistance was a successful procedure, and asked whether the working group should go in that direction.
17. The **delegation of Romania** thanked Sweden for its hospitality in supporting this discussion and congratulated the Chairperson on his election. The delegation supported the establishment of an online platform and considered that its two most important roles were to allow communities to express themselves more directly, as well as to encourage more international cooperation and inspiration. It was important not to forget the three guiding principles of the meeting: community participation, visibility of living heritage, and bureaucratic simplification. For that reason, the delegation wanted to mention that the existing instrument on the Convention webpage – [Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/dive) – already allowed searching of practices and traditions. Regarding first steps, the delegation felt that the first communities to be invited to share their practices should be the thirty-three projects inscribed on the Register.
18. The **delegation of Peru** supported the platform as a good tool for visibility and communication, but shared the concern expressed by other delegations with regards the cost of the platform and NGO involvement, particularly for regions with few accredited NGOs. The delegation echoed concerns expressed by Brazil (paragraph 77) around the accessibility and utility of the platform for communities with limited access to the internet and how to involve these communities in the construction of the platform.
19. The **delegation of Ukraine** thanked Sweden for providing the opportunity for discussion and congratulated the Chairperson for the smooth running of the meeting. It also expressed gratitude to UNESCO, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Moldova and Romania for the support given to protect Ukraine’s intangible cultural heritage and support artists, practitioners and bearers. The delegation was in support of the creation of an online platform.
20. The **ICH NGO Forum** thanked the Secretariat and the members of the meeting for the dynamic discussions. It then shared the main suggestions that had come out of a survey the ICH NGO Forum had sent to members of its umbrella organization. The first was the importance of the online platform being inclusive and participatory, involving all communities at the grassroots level, as well as the accredited NGOs. The second was the importance of improving communication between all stakeholders. It added that the ICH NGO Forum had two online platforms covering different geographical regions, and this could be used as a platform for sharing the Register.
21. The **delegation of Tunisia** stated a lot of work was needed to convince communities of the benefits of getting involved. With the application to one of the Lists, the benefit was clear: inscription of the element. However, this was not so obvious when it came to engaging communities to get involved with the new platform. The delegation was not sure the platform would meet the needs and expectations of the communities concerned. It would be important to trigger some sort of dynamic on a national level for States Parties to inform communities of the purpose of the new platform.
22. The **delegation of Indonesia** supported the creation of an online platform and referred to the Living Intangible Cultural Heritage Forum in Indonesia for the [Wayang Puppet Theatre](https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/wayang-puppet-theatre-00063), which could be joined by other countries and helped share good intangible cultural heritage practices.
23. The **delegation of Belgium** remarked that all the NGOs in the meeting were using the nameplate ICH NGO Forum, which could lead to confusion.
24. The **delegation of Cameroon** congratulated the Chairperson on the smooth running of the meeting. The delegation wanted to stress that the platform could play a significant educational role, rather than a role of a statutory nature.
25. The **Chairperson** summarized the first half of the afternoon. He noted that there was general support for the proposals of the expert group, and that the step‑by‑step process had been discussed. There was not much support for a monitoring role. There had to be a way for practitioners to cooperate and share their good safeguarding experiences, and a new way to broaden discussions and include new actors. A draft summary of discussions and proposals made in the meeting would be sent to participants later that evening.
26. The **Secretary** read through the first draft of recommendations based on the discussions so far, as well as those made by the expert meeting. The Bureau would share the recommendations for approval by the working group, and then these recommendations would be sent to the Committee ([document LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)). There were four discussion points under Topic 2:

a. Pertinence of an online platform: The creation of a moderated online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences was essential for a broader operationalization of Article 18.

b. Objective of an online platform: The main objective was to provide a space for communities, groups, and individuals, where appropriate, to share good safeguarding experiences, particularly in terms of sharing follow‑up communication, collaboration and capacity building. The Secretary reminded members that capacity‑building modules were already available online.

c. Practical considerations: A network of inscribed elements and practices may be formed on the platform to exchange information following their inscription or selection to the Lists or the Register, and to share results. A set of practical considerations should be examined regarding the management of information flow, online possibilities, use of mother languages and ethical considerations. There had been a lot of support for a step‑by‑step, phased approach to creating the platform. A detailed plan for establishing the online platform would be presented to the eighteenth session of the Committee.

d. Administrative and financial considerations: The decision rested with the Committee and the General Assembly. Initial estimates were USD$300,000 for the initial setup and USD$500,000 per year for maintenance costs. The question was: *who would fund the platform?* A reliable and sustainable source would be needed for the maintenance costs. One option would be the Fund of the Convention or a regular programme.

1. The **delegation of Latvia** supported the intervention by the delegation of Ukraine (paragraph 90), namely that an online platform could serve as an exchange of information for communities and organizations in times of crisis.
2. The **delegation of Czechia** suggested rewording the first point, as currently the formulation implied that there was no way to operationalize Article 18. It offered ‘conducive’ as an alternative.
3. The **delegation of Belgium** said it would like to see all potential actors included in the text, including category 2 centres, UNESCO Chairs, NGOs and experts, as mentioned in point 18 of [document LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx). The delegation also felt it was important to resist the temptation to make the platform just an online register. Instead, the various possibilities of different communication platforms should be used fully to make the platform a dynamic website where many networks could converge, and many actors could work together. Indeed, many actors should contribute to creating the platform, not just one UNESCO official.
4. The **Secretary** clarified that these recommendations were in early draft form, and the document itself did refer to broader participation.
5. The **delegation of Algeria** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, and thanked colleagues, experts and the Secretariat for their hard work. It supported the approach and approved the intervention from the delegation of Belgium (paragraph 100) regarding inclusivity of all stakeholders to the Convention. The delegation wanted to know how the Secretariat saw future moderation of the online platform, given that several stakeholders would be involved in the platform.
6. The **Secretary** thanked the delegation of Algeria for the important question. Ideally, minimal moderation would be needed, but that was not possible in an online environment where anyone could say anything. The moderation could be a combination of an advisory group (made up of accredited NGOs, UNESCO Chairs and focal points, among others) on the one hand, and the Secretariat on the other to ensure that what went on the platform was in keeping with the spirit and mandate of UNESCO. Some moderation would therefore be needed, but the aim was to keep it as open and light as possible. This issue would be discussed at the Committee and the General Assembly.
7. The **delegation of Switzerland** asked the Secretariat to present a detailed plan of financing options alongside the detailed plan for implementation to be presented to the Committee, since cost was a crucial issue.
8. The **delegation of Brazil** said that, with regards to geographic representation, no regional group should be left behind, particularly the ones with least connection to the internet and digital platforms.
9. The **Secretary** acknowledged that this was an extremely important point for the platform to work. The technology had to be accessible and not too high‑tech. This would be included in the recommendations.
10. The accredited NGO **‘Workshop Intangible Heritage Flanders’** said some of the options that had been discussed had not been reflected in the draft recommendations. The first option was to improve communication of the Register, which could involve simply improving the UNESCO [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/home) and existing tools. The second option was to reach out to the broader network of facilitators, NGOs, focal points and UNESCO Chairs, among others, who knew the language of the Convention and shared the commitment to safeguard with the communities. In that case, experiences could be shared and then mediated by the Secretariat. The third option was to involve communities and create a dynamic platform that would be managed by the communities rather than in an institutional context. This should be clear before moving on to practical steps.
11. The **Secretary** said this was an important topic. Indeed, the easiest thing to work on would be the current [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/home), improving the visibility of good safeguarding practices currently on the Register. That would be relatively inexpensive, but it was a cosmetic approach. Having a platform that engaged all communities everywhere, in other words creating an intangible cultural heritage social media platform where everybody can give their opinion, was not realistic. There had to be a compromise, and that compromise would become clear through the recommendations.
12. The **delegation of Qatar** congratulated the Chairperson on the way he was leading the session. It expressed support for the creation of the platform that would allow communities to share their experiences. However, since different experiences would be posted in local languages, the issues of translation and translation costs needed to be discussed.
13. The **Secretary** acknowledged the importance of the translation question and said it would be looked into before presenting the recommendations. Due to costs, human translators and interpreters were not an option, but there was currently rather good technology for a number of languages, and this technology may improve in the future.
14. The **ICH NGO Forum** said the need for a simple website had to be balanced with the fact that most users spent relatively little time on most websites. Immersive web design, based on how people learn and absorb experiences, had to be considered. Simplicity had to be balanced with design that engaged users through interactivity. This meant that investing in good web design was critical.
15. The **ICH NGO Forum** wanted to address the issue of keeping the process simple. The issue of translation was fair, but States had a role to play. It was important to move away from the bureaucratic approach and move on the ground, looking at capacity building and possible synergies.
16. The **delegation of Austria** asked whether it made sense to have the Register and keep it on the international level, given that the proposed platform would gather safeguarding practices from elements on national lists, international lists, and those not on any list.
17. The **Secretary** said this was a very good point and at the basis of this reflection. Article 18 did not specify that a register needed to be created like the list of UNESCO safeguarding practices. Rather, this was one of the options. The idea of the platform was a hybrid. On the one hand, the Register would be kept, but a space would be opened beyond the Register for sharing. What would be discussed on the platform would not become a UNESCO‑designated safeguarding practice. This is where the moderation would need to take place. The work would begin with the network of designated UNESCO practices, and then evolve organically in a step‑by‑step way. The notion of arm’s length was also important. If UNESCO chose the good safeguarding practices, that would replicate the function of the Register.
18. Regarding the relevance of the network of designated items, the **delegation of Switzerland** was in favour of supporting it. There was a relation between the programmes on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, the items on the Representative list, the focal points of the Convention, the communities and the periodic reports. This provided a solid foundation.
19. The **Secretary** agreed and mentioned that the 1972 Convention had seen interesting developments through the network of natural and cultural site managers who were able to share heritage conservation practices through the Convention’s mechanisms. This was similar to sharing good safeguarding practices and bringing together the community.
20. The **Chairperson** summarized the discussion so far. He recalled that the question of how the online platform would be moderated needed to be further discussed. It should be made clear in the recommendations that the approach had to be inclusive. There was also the question of reaching out to non‑website users and communities. The importance of geographical location should also be reflected in the recommendations, as well as the question of economic and administrative issues, costs, languages and the connection to periodic reports and national registers. The draft recommendation texts would include these points.
21. The **delegation of Belgium** suggested adding a quick win to the first step. If the working group looked thirty years into the future, it may conclude that the new ways of sharing were better than a bureaucratic Register and may wish to move beyond sticking to the network of inscribed elements. There would probably be other solutions which may be more cost-effective and effective than the system being used today.
22. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretary to introduce Topic 3.

**TOPIC 3: ANY OTHER ISSUES**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/3 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-3_REV_EN.docx)

[*LHE/23/ EXP ART18/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)

1. The **Secretary** said Topic 3 had been kept deliberately light to give the working group the opportunity to discuss aspects of the broader implementation of Article 18 that had not yet been covered. Experts had made a number of recommendations ([[document LHE/23/EXP ART18/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx)](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-4_REV_EN.docx)), such as making additional financial resources available to help communities prepare, implement and follow up on safeguarding experiences that best reflected the Convention, and creating initiatives to raise awareness of Article 18 and recognize community efforts, such as awards, prizes, labels, certification of good safeguarding practices, or setting up ‘good safeguarding practice’ days.
2. The **delegation of Czechia** said there may be more useful ways to build capacities across different regions. One idea would be to hold side events at major events organized under the 2003 Convention, or the Committee and Assembly meetings. Since many experts were usually in attendance, this could be an efficient way to build capacity.
3. The **ICH NGO Forum** recalled that many States Parties already had national registers of good safeguarding practices and national information systems, and that the online platform should link to these.
4. The **delegation of Belgium** supported the idea raised by one of the NGOs (paragraph 122). There were potential benefits to national registers of good practices, and perhaps that could be promoted via a campaign. A few periodic reports were described, and those experiences could be exchanged. The delegation hoped this was already happening among the different groups and focal points, and suggested this may be something to develop. Given that a few years were left before 2030 and that a new Agenda 2045 was coming up, the delegation wondered whether it might be useful to organize something or call for specific proposals for Article 18. The Committee could think about the role of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in achieving sustainable development goals. *Was there a mechanism in the UNESCO Convention for sending strategic messages about Article 18, in combination with periodic reports and the Overall Results Framework?* This could be a way forward.
5. The **Secretary** said the idea by the delegation of Belgium (paragraph 123) was spot on. That was being explored in relation to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and various events, as well as the revision of the forms and a greater emphasis on the connection between broader sustainable development issues within the listing mechanisms. The indexing that the working group had discussed may generate that kind of data. The Secretariat would work on indexing the periodic reporting and harvesting the information that came out of that exercise. With regards to the creation of prizes, the Secretary reminded the working group that UNESCO prizes are approved through the Executive Board of UNESCO and the General Conference of UNESCO, which meant that creating a UNESCO prize at the international level was a bit more complex.
6. The **delegation of Brazil** supported the intervention by the delegation of Belgium (paragraph 123). It recalled the Latin America and the Caribbean week and the interesting presentation on the importance of elements inscribed on the Lists for sustainable development. It would be a good idea to connect these good practices to the future agenda, given that the culture of the United Nations was entering a new frontier.
7. The **delegation of Tunisia** said the platform may be a useful framework to take advantage of the momentum present when nominations were being prepared, with regards to the links with the communities putting forward the elements as well as the NGOs involved.
8. Regarding the financial costs of the platform, the **delegation of Austria** felt the Fund should not be used for the running costs because this would be an extrabudgetary expense. Using the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund without additional contributions would mean potentially taking away assistance from Member States, including from capacity‑building activities and priority groups such as Africa and Small Island Developing States. The delegation felt this was not a feasible option.
9. The **delegation of Sweden** said that establishing UNESCO prizes would imply complicated administration and may not be worth the effort. Additionally, it felt designated days on safeguarding practices were not an effective way of raising awareness.
10. The accredited NGO **‘The Folklore Studies Association of Canada’** asked whether, regarding specific initiatives for raising awareness of Article 18, training would be provided to facilitators. The training would help facilitators raise awareness within communities of the existence of the new platform as well as how and why to use it.
11. The **Secretary** said this (paragraph 129) was a valid point and that everything in the Convention was generally accompanied by a capacity‑building approach. It was of course resource- and time-dependent.
12. The **delegation of Belgium** asked whether, since the United States had returned to UNESCO and brought along millions of dollars of funds, some of that money could be invested in the Convention.
13. The **Secretary** said that the United States had not ratified the 2003 Convention, and therefore would not be paying contributions to the Fund of the Convention. The Secretariat was looking for more States to ratify the Convention and some States had expressed interest, so the Fund’s resources may increase in a year or two. There were two sources of sustained funding that could be considered for the platform: the UNESCO regular programme and the Fund of the Convention. With regards to the Fund, the Secretary acknowledged what the delegation of Austria had said (paragraph 127), but before deciding what was possible, it would be a good idea to look at the numbers and projections, since the Fund may increase in the near future, and spending on International Assistance had improved of late. It was also important to note that the Fund was fine for one‑off funding but may not be suitable for sustained funding.
14. The **delegation of Belgium** suggested doing more work on the criteria in order to save time in Botswana, given that there was still a lot of time.
15. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretary to elaborate on the timetable.
16. The **Secretary** acknowledged the request by the delegation of Belgium (paragraph 133) and said he would not feel comfortable pre‑empting the work of the Committee nor working on a text that had not been checked legally. He then proposed that the Secretariat draft recommendations on Topics 1 to 3 that evening. The Bureau would meet the next morning to check the drafting and make comments. There would be a plenary meeting in the morning. Once the Bureau was satisfied with the draft recommendations, these would be sent to all participants of the meeting. Participants would then reconvene in the afternoon to discuss the wording of the draft recommendations. By the end of the working group, the language for the draft recommendations should be agreed.
17. Having confirmed that the plan was acceptable to all in the room, the **Chairperson** adjourned the meeting.

*[Wednesday, 5 July 2023, afternoon session]*

1. The **Chairperson** opened the session with the question raised by the delegation of Brazil (paragraph 55) regarding the success rate of proposals submitted to the Register, and gave the floor to the Secretary.
2. The **Secretary** recalled that since 2009, the Committee had examined forty-two proposals to the Register, thirty-three of which had been selected, and nine either referred or not selected. This equated to a 79 per cent selection rate. For comparison, in the same timeframe there had been 462 nominations to the Representative List, 387 of which had been inscribed, equating to an 84 per cent selection rate.
3. The **Secretary** then referred to a question raised regarding submissions in the community’s original language (paragraph 26). He reminded the working group that the global reflection on the listing mechanisms had made it possible for States to submit nominations to the Lists and the Register in their original languages as well as in English and French. For the 2024 cycle, nominations had been received in forty different languages, including Arabic, Aguaruna (or *Awajún),* Chinese, Mayan, Russian, Spanish, Totonac, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. These nominations would be placed online in English, French and the original language.
4. The **Chairperson** checked that the delegation of Brazil was happy with the information, then opened the next item for discussion.

**ITEM 4**

**ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/**18.COM WG ART18/4 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-4_REV_EN.docx)

1. The **Chairperson** said discussions on Topics 1, 2 and 3 had been fruitful and reached consensus on several important points. Based on those discussions, the Secretariat had drafted a set of recommendations, and these were reviewed and adjusted by the Bureau. He hoped the working group had had a chance to read through the document. Two amendments had so far been submitted by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland. States Parties could also present amendments during the afternoon’s discussions. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.
2. The **delegation of Palestine** congratulated Sweden and thanked the experts for their efforts. The delegation supported the proposal for the online platform. There had been much discussion about the rights of communities, groups and individuals regarding intangible cultural heritage, *but what about the rights of the elements?* The delegation believed that steps should be taken to align rules to protect the commercial use of intangible cultural heritage, particularly in line with the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. The delegation felt this was in line with the exchange of experiences on the online platform.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked the delegation of Palestine for raising this important issue and said the comment would be noted and included in the annex to [working document 4 Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-4_REV_EN.docx) (Report to the Intergovernmental Committee). He requested that remarks be kept concise and relevant in order to facilitate the afternoon’s debates. The Chairperson then suggested that the working group review the recommendations paragraph by paragraph. With no comments received, for paragraph 1 was adopted.
4. The **delegation of Czechia** suggested the date on paragraph 2 be changed in case the meeting ended the same day.
5. The **Chairperson** said he appreciated Czechia’s optimism. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 were adopted. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Annex ([Recommendations of the open‑ended intergovernmental working group](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-4_REV_EN.docx)) were also adopted. The Chairperson then moved on to paragraph 3(a), Topic 1: Improving the access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
6. The **delegation of Belgium** referred to the intervention by the delegation of Switzerland relating to cooperation. It wondered whether instead of merging criterion P.6 with P.1 and P.2, it would be better to merge criterion P.6 with P.7. This would focus on the description of the programme and activities according to Article 2.3 of the Convention and combine the further implementation – as expressed in criterion P.6 – with P.7. It would also add the idea of cooperation to criterion P.7. The delegation had submitted two amendments for this paragraph (a) and for this proposed merging of criteria P.6 and P.7. The proposal could solve some of the issues discussed the previous day.
7. The **Secretary** asked Belgium to clarify the proposed amendments.
8. The **delegation of Belgium** said the amendment was to combine criteria P.1 and P.3.
9. The **Secretary** said the amendments were actually new proposals.
10. The **delegation of Belgium** explained that the proposed amendment to the paragraph being discussed was to cancel criterion P.6 and the second bullet point and move it to a combined criterion P.6 and P.7.
11. The **Chairperson** asked for the edits to be further clarified so they could be made on the screen.
12. **The delegation of Belgium** said the paragraph would remain the same, but criteria P.1 and P.3 should be merged, and this revised criterion should also refer to the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf). It could also potentially refer to [Ethical Principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866) 1, 3, 4, 10 and 12. Criterion P.6 could be moved, as this issue caused a number of interventions and doubts. It would be better in relation to criterion P.7.
13. The **Chairperson** asked the delegation of Belgium to comment on the amendments on screen.
14. The **delegation of Belgium** was interested to hear the proposals from the delegations of Switzerland and Germany before adopting criteria P.6 and P.7.
15. The **Secretary** said he had received the proposed amendment but suggested keeping the two as separate issues because one referred to the criterion and the other referred to the forms. The criterion had to be adopted by the General Assembly, whereas the forms could be decided by the Committee. The Secretariat’s suggestion was to keep them separate.
16. The **delegation of Belgium** said the form was an easier option than trying to include the [Ethical Principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866) in the criterion. With the form, the goal was achieved in a simpler way.
17. The **Secretary** said he understood, but to change the form, the criterion would also need to be changed. If criteria P.1 and P.3 were merged, this would have to be approved by the General Assembly because those criteria were in the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf). At the same time, the form could be changed. If both paragraphs were kept, both amendments could be done.
18. The **delegation of Switzerland** said it wished the spirit of criterion P.2 to be reflected in the new criterion. If this wasn’t in a new criterion P.1, then it should be in the merged criterion P.6 and P.7. The delegation also wanted to move away from ‘models’ and towards ‘sources of inspiration’.
19. Speaking about the programme, activities and projects, the **delegation of Palestine** said that criteria P.2 and P.4 should be merged since strengthening and preserving intangible cultural heritage and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage were the same thing.
20. The **Chairperson** said the working group would first finish paragraph 3(a) before moving on to the next paragraph and criterion P.2.
21. The **delegation of Romania** suggested that the word ‘simplified’ be placed at the beginning of the paragraph, because what was being done was more than simplification. This was more of an adjustment, since some criteria were being merged.
22. The **Chairperson** asked for more proposals under this point.
23. The **Secretary** said that because of the amendment by the delegation of Belgium, it should read ‘criteria P.1 and P.3 are to be merged’.
24. The **Chairperson** summarized the changes. ‘Adjusted’ would replace ‘simplified’, as proposed by the delegation of Romania. ‘And P.6’ should be replaced by ‘criteria P.1 and P.6’. There would be a new bullet point 2 and the earlier bullet point would be erased, as suggested by the delegation of Belgium. The changes to paragraph 3(a) were adopted. The Chairperson moved on to criterion P.2 and asked Palestine to elaborate on its suggestion.
25. The **delegation of Palestine** said criteria P.2 and P.4 had the same goal. Strengthening the project through safeguarding was the same as the project preserving safeguarding. The two points strengthened the preservation of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
26. The **Secretary** clarified the options. P.4 read ‘the programme, project or activity has demonstrated effectiveness in contributing to the viability of intangible cultural heritage’. Criterion P.2 read ‘the programme, project or activity promotes coordination of efforts for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage on regional, subregional or international levels’. This was included in the second bullet point, which the delegation of Belgium had suggested to be deleted and repositioned. The question was: *should it be repositioned within criterion P.4, which would satisfy the request by the delegation of Palestine, or would the delegation of Belgium prefer it to be repositioned in another criterion?*
27. The **delegation of Belgium** stated that criterion P.4 was in the past tense (‘has demonstrated’) while criterion P.2 was more active (‘promotes coordination’). The idea was to merge criteria P.6, P.7, and P.2 in the paragraph. This idea – how the selected project could be shared, promoted, coordinated – could be integrated into a new combination of criteria P.2, P.6 and P.7. Criterion P.4 should be kept because it was important that the project demonstrate that it worked.
28. The **delegation of Palestine** agreed with the changes proposed by the delegations of Belgium and Switzerland.
29. The **Chairperson** understood that everyone agreed with the deletion of criterion P.2. Paragraph 3(b) was adopted. Criterion P.4 was to be kept but the [Form ICH‑03](https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms) would need to be revised to repeat the description of the initial situation which called for safeguarding. With no amendments or requests for the floor, paragraph 3(c) was adopted. The Chairperson moved to paragraph 3(d) and criterion P.5.
30. The **delegation of Belgium** suggested adding ‘sustained’ to the criterion, for it to read ‘with their free, prior, sustained and informed consent’.
31. The **Chairperson** asked for comments or objections. With no comments or objections, paragraph 3(d) was adopted. The Chairperson then opened the floor for comments on paragraph 3(e) and criterion P.7.
32. The **delegation of Belgium** explained that the idea was a combination of criteria P.2, P.6 and P.7. The amended criterion P.7 could request that if a practice was selected, the State or community would agree to share, cooperate and work together with others.
33. The **Secretary** thanked the delegation of Belgium but noted that this seemed to be a new drafting of the criterion, whereas the work was to draft recommendations. He suggested adding what had been deleted in an earlier paragraph, then proposing a criterion that brought all these concepts together.
34. The **delegation of Belgium** said it would not like to lose the idea of the implementing bodies, which was present in criterion P.7.
35. The **Secretary** suggested the wording ‘States Parties, communities and other stakeholders’.
36. The **delegation of Belgium** agreed.
37. The **delegation of the Netherlands** said it agreed with combining the two criteria, but perhaps it should be mentioned because the text of criterion P.6 had been adjusted.
38. The **Secretary** suggested the sentence: ‘Criteria P.6 and P.7 are to be merged and adjusted to refer to good practices instead of best practices’.
39. The **Chairperson** checked whether the delegation of the Netherlands agreed, and whether there were any further suggestions. Paragraph 3(e) was adopted. Paragraph 3(f) was adopted. For paragraph 3(g), there were two suggestions. The first option was to keep the current chapeau using the word ‘best’. The second option was to adjust the current chapeau so that it was clear the proposal should satisfy all four criteria. The Chairperson requested the working group reach consensus around one proposal and opened the floor for comments.
40. The **delegation of Belgium** said the world ‘best’ snuck in during the drafting of the original [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) because it was an analogy with ‘best practices’, but that this created a hierarchy between all the programmes, which was not in the spirit of the Convention. A more elegant solution would be to copy the text from paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Operational Directives.
41. The **delegation of Czechia** supported the version that clearly indicated that all criteria had to be met. However, given that at this stage the criteria were in a state of change, it may be preferable to leave the final decision to the Committee.
42. The **Chairperson** agreed with the statement by the delegation of Czechia and said it was a good idea not to leave too many questions open. He asked the Secretary to clarify.
43. The **Secretary** said that the word ‘best’, in the present system, meant that not all criteria needed to be satisfied for the Evaluation Body to make an overall recommendation. In contrast, all criteria had to be satisfied for the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List. With this reduced number of criteria, all criteria should be satisfied in order to be positively recommended. The two options being presented would align them with how it worked for the other two Lists and make a difference to how it had been practiced so far.
44. The **delegation of Austria** said it would follow the consensus, but was in favour of the second option, which required all four criteria to be met. Another option would be to remove the word ‘all’ and discuss which of the four basic requirements in the criteria might be removed. However, the delegation was flexible.
45. The **delegation of Brazil** commended the Secretariat and members of the Bureau for their work. It was in favour of the second option, which required all selection criteria to be met.
46. The **Chairperson** confirmed four countries had so far supported the second option.
47. The **delegation of Romania** and the **delegation of Slovakia** supported the second option.
48. The **delegation of Switzerland** supported the second option. It also proposed deleting the words ‘four’ and ‘reduced’, leaving ‘should best satisfy all selection criteria’.
49. The **delegation of Norway** expressed its preference for the first option because keeping ‘all’ and taking away ‘best’ moved the discussion to what it means to satisfy a criterion. What was most important was the best representatives. However, the delegation would go with the consensus.
50. The **delegation of Peru** and the **delegation of Paraguay** supported the second option.
51. The **delegation of Estonia** supported the second option with the slight amendment in wording proposed by the delegation of Belgium.
52. The **Secretary** suggested deleting ‘following’ as there were no other criteria following this text.
53. The **Chairperson** checked that the delegation of Estonia was in agreement.
54. The **delegation of Estonia** agreed.
55. The **delegation of the Netherlands** supported the second option as well as the Secretary’s last point.
56. The **delegation of Poland**, the **delegation of Jamaica** and the **delegation of Tunisia** supported the second option.
57. The **delegation of Viet Nam** agreed with the second option and the Secretary’s wording suggestion.
58. The **delegation of Ukraine** supported the second option.
59. The **delegation of Norway** said it would stand with the majority and support the second option.
60. The **Chairperson** said that the second option would be presented to the Committee. Paragraph 3 was adopted in its entirety. He passed the floor to the Secretary.
61. The **Secretary** confirmed that the recommendations agreed in this working group would be presented to the Committee. Some of those recommendations would require amendments to the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), so they would be accompanied by proposed amendments to the Operational Directives. Some might require changes to forms or Committee decisions. The Secretariat would work with the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs to ensure these amendments were clear. The Committee would propose revisions to the Operational Directives at the General Assembly.
62. The **Chairperson** apologized for forgetting to give the floor to the ICH NGO Forum.
63. The **ICH NGO Forum** suggested replacing the word ‘adjusted’ with ‘revised’ in paragraph 3(e), which was more appropriate given that the changes were more substantial.
64. The **Chairperson** thanked the ICH NGO Forum and said because the working group had gone through this in detail and a consensus had been reached, he believed the wording should be kept as it was.
65. The **ICH NGO Forum** said that since UNESCO was an organization that accepted exceptions, it hoped that its proposed amendments to paragraph 2, which it had also sent to a colleague, had been received and would be looked at.
66. The **Chairperson** said paragraph 2 had already been adopted.
67. The **Secretary** reminded participants that amendments had to be sent to [ICH*‑*amendments*@*unesco*.*org](mailto:ICHamendments@unesco.org), and only amendments submitted to that email address would be discussed.
68. The **Chairperson** moved on to paragraph 4. With no questions or suggestions, paragraph 4 was adopted. For paragraph 5, two options needed to be discussed. The first option was separating the Register from the listing system so that it was not in competition with nominations to the other Lists. The second option was not reopening the issue, because there had already been an extensive discussion on the topic in the framework of the global reflection of the listing mechanisms. Amendments had been received from the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
69. The **delegation of Switzerland** said that adjustments to the listing mechanisms had been adopted in 2022 and implemented. It was important now to let the system run. The system had to include all three Lists to avoid overburdening the work of the Evaluation Body. For the Register to be more visible, it had to be kept in the current listing system. That was why the delegations of Germany and Switzerland proposed not to re‑open the issue on the listing mechanisms, and not submitting this to the Committee.
70. The **delegation of Austria** wanted to know the implications of the other option. *Would it be simpler for applicants and communities? Would the selection process be easier if it didn’t go through the Evaluation Body?*
71. The **delegation of Kazakhstan** said the importance of the Register was a top priority. However, because it had been part of the extensive discussions on the issue, it supported the proposal by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
72. The **delegation of Algeria** joined the delegations of Germany, Switzerland and Kazakhstan in support of this option. It felt a delicate balance had been reached after extensive discussions on the Lists, and reopening the debate would be risky.
73. The **delegation of Japan** said now was not the appropriate time to consider a review of the listing mechanisms, which was the result of a longstanding effort and was in the process of reflection. The delegation supported the proposal from the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
74. The **delegation of Belgium** said it understood the proposal by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland, but felt there was ambiguity on this topic. *Was this about the three Lists, or was it about how many files could be dealt with in each cycle by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body?*
75. The **delegation of Czechia** supported the proposal by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
76. The **delegation of Viet Nam** supported the proposal by the delegation of Switzerland. It felt the current practice worked well. It also thanked the delegation of Belgium for the points and suggested adding something along the lines of ‘take into consideration of the content during the open-ended working group’.
77. The **delegation of Sweden** supported the amendment by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
78. The **delegation of Brazil** said the working group could not make a decision on the item because no answer had been provided to the question by the delegation of Austria (paragraph 210). The delegation echoed the concerns expressed by the delegations of Belgium and Viet Nam regarding the potential implications, including budgetary implications. More reflection was needed on this item. It asked the Secretariat for clarity regarding the budgetary implication and the ceiling.
79. The **Secretary** acknowledged that the delegation of Belgium was right, and this was related to the ceiling that had been adopted by the General Assembly. The implication of going beyond that ceiling would be to reopen the debate on the listing mechanisms. It was agreed that going beyond the ceiling of sixty files was not possible because it would mean reopening a new Evaluation Body, a new parallel processing, and going back to discussions that had been had over the three years of reflection. The other option might be to prioritize a space within the sixty files just for the Register, but this would imply prioritization issues. For example, would it be forty files for the two Lists and twenty for the Register? And if that was the case, could States Parties apply for both? How would States be prioritized? It would trigger debates that had already been had over three years, where a consensus had been achieved at the General Assembly. But this option would not require changing the Evaluation Body nor the broader function of the evaluation system. Another option, which was not very feasible, was to create a new Evaluation Body and to go beyond the ceiling of sixty files. But this would also mean going back to those discussions. The Secretary felt that the platform allowed for a little bit of an escape valve because there was no need for UNESCO designations. He recalled that a consensus had been ‘no’ to the question of whether the evaluation process should be lightened to allow for more files.
80. The **delegation of Austria** thanked the Secretary for the clear explanation, and joined the group led by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland for the second option.
81. The **delegation of Belgium** said its comment related mainly to the notion of the listing system. It was about paragraphs 33–35 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) regarding examination of files by the Committee. The listing system meant more than just dealing with files. The delegation requested that the working group better define the listing system.
82. The **Chairperson** said because it was going to be deleted, the text wouldn’t be reflected in the proposition. If the working group wanted to make references to the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), it would have to express it in another way.
83. The **Secretary** stated that the second paragraph said ‘in the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention’, and that this was the title of the reflection that took place. It referred to what it was called when it took place, so there was no point changing it.
84. The **delegation of Belgium** said it was about the chapeau, which should be separate from the listing system. It proposed referring to the exact [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) or making sure the listing mechanisms of the Convention referred to something specific. The delegation felt the words ‘listing system’ referred to how to use the Representative List and not only to how many files were treated in the process.
85. The **Chairperson** suggested coming back to the delegation of Belgium when it had wording to suggest.
86. The **delegation of Jamaica** and the **delegation of France** supported the proposal by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
87. The **delegation of Belgium** proposed deleting the first part of the sentence in order to not refer to the issue of whether the Register should be separated.
88. The **Secretary** agreed that the wording referred to the Register rather than the listing system and proposed using the language suggested by the expert group. ‘The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices should be separated from the nomination process, including the priority system and the annual ceiling of nominations to be examined.’
89. The **delegation of Belgium** agreed.
90. The **delegation of Spain** believed the Register deserved special attention, given that the working group had convened to improve its scope, utilization and balance. One way to encourage communities to share good practices was to not have the Register compete with the other Lists. Since it did not appear feasible to establish a parallel Evaluation Body to evaluate nominations to the Register, the delegation felt that prioritization of those files could be considered within the currently established quota. However, this possibility was not included in either option. The delegation was in favour of the first option with different wording.
91. The **delegation of Qatar** supported the amendment by the delegations of Switzerland and Germany.
92. Referring to the intervention by the delegation of Spain (paragraph 230), the **Secretary** said that this had been part of the discussions during the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, and that priorities had been established. A recommendation could be made, but this would involve going back to that discussion.
93. The **delegation of Spain** said this answered its question.
94. The **Chairperson** said a consensus had been reached for the recommendation to the Committee to make the chapeau option two with new wording. Paragraph 4 was adopted. The Chairperson said amendments had been received from the ICH NGO Forum, but that these would not be discussed because this was a State Party meeting. However, the amendments would be included in the report. Paragraph 5 was adopted. Paragraph 6 was adopted. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments on paragraph 7.
95. The **delegation of Belgium** noted that the paragraph was missing the proposal discussed the previous day to use periodic reports to detect potential inspirational safeguarding practices that deserved special attention or could be shared.
96. The **Secretary** asked for clarification, since several proposals had been discussed. One was the need for a monitoring and follow-up framework. The other was how to harvest the data to find interesting safeguarding practices. He asked the delegation of Belgium for its suggestions on wording.
97. The **delegation of Belgium** said the paragraph should be used to activate the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) that allow the Committee to call for something, such as analysis of the periodic reports. The platform could be fed by interesting examples detected in the periodic reports.
98. The **Secretary** said this would have to be discussed during the reflection year on periodic reporting. He suggested new wording that reflected this and the broader implementation of Article 18.
99. The **delegation of Belgium** agreed and remarked that paragraph 4 of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) could be used as an instrument to recall the fact that the Committee could call for this broader implementation.
100. The **delegation of Austria** offered an amendment to paragraph 7(b): the addition of ‘ongoing programmes included in the Register’.
101. The **delegation of Ukraine** offered an amendment to paragraph 7(a): adding ‘in emergency situations’, particularly relating to International Assistance.
102. The **Secretary** reminded the working group that there were two issues in this paragraph. The first was International Assistance, which already prioritized emergency situations. The second was whether the broader implementation of Article 18 should apply to emergency situations.
103. The **delegation of Ukraine** confirmed it would like that wording (paragraph 241) at the beginning of the sentence.
104. The **delegation of Romania** supported the wording proposed by the delegation of Belgium. It shared that, as stated by the delegation of Austria (paragraph 240), the reporting for projects inscribed on the Register was particularly important for ongoing projects. It was indeed true that the system was heavy, but the delegation expected the system to become lighter and simpler as the Convention evolved. This simplification would encourage communities implementing the projects to connect with States Parties and focal points and to report about their ongoing activities.
105. The **Chairperson** suggested the adoption of paragraph 7. It was adopted. He moved on to Topic 2: Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences. Paragraph 8 was adopted. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments on paragraph 9.
106. The **delegation of Belgium** suggested formulating the paragraph more positively, perhaps expressing hope around finding solutions.
107. The **delegation of Romania** supported the suggestion by the delegation of Belgium. Since the previous day’s discussions had been in support of setting up the platform, the paragraph should reflect that support.
108. The **delegation of Brazil** said it was not completely in agreement with the point made by the delegation of Romania, and asked about costs. The Secretariat had said there was no money for funding activities for GRULAC or Small Island Developing States. The delegation supported the platform but wanted an idea of the budgetary implications, and wished for this to be reflected in the recommendations.
109. The **delegation of Belgium** recalled that the expert group in Stockholm had come up with a series of proposals for funding, thinking outside of the box. It suggested adding wording to reflect that the working group hoped to find solutions.
110. The **delegation of Austria** reminded the working group that it had submitted an amendment. There was still uncertainty between sharing good safeguarding practices through the platform and good safeguarding practices on the *Register. Was one about UNESCO‑approved practices while the other was not legitimate? What was the relationship? Would communities have an incentive to go through the heavy process of nominating for the Register, if the two were the same?*
111. The **Secretary** said his understanding was that the platform would contain good safeguarding practices that were not necessarily UNESCO‑designated. In that sense, it would not require an intergovernmental process.
112. The **delegation of Austria** requested that this be described in the recommendations.
113. The **Secretary** said that the matter of funding could not be resolved in this present working group and should be left for the Committee and the General Assembly to discuss. He then suggested adding the issue of the relationship between elements on the Register and practices included on the platform as a new paragraph 10, in line with the amendment from the delegation of Austria.
114. The **Secretary** also suggested softening the wording to find a middle ground, replacing ‘concerns’ with ‘questions’ regarding financing of the platform.
115. The **delegation of Belgium** said it had submitted an amendment, to add that hopes and suggestions had been expressed to find solutions.
116. The **delegation of Brazil** said it supported the proposal by the Secretary, which was a good common ground.
117. The **Chairperson** proposed having a new paragraph reflecting the amendment from the delegation of Austria.
118. The **delegation of Austria** suggested adding ‘furthermore, concerns were raised about the relations’.
119. The **Secretary** suggested ‘while the working group noted that this was a worthy proposal, some raised questions about the financing’. He added that this was a recommendation and therefore it would need to include ‘which will need to be addressed’. Perhaps also adding ‘a question was also asked as to the…’.
120. The **delegation of Austria** said it preferred ‘questions’.
121. The **Secretary** suggested that the paragraph recommend that clarification be provided on the relationship between the elements on the Register and the practices to be found on the platform. The clarification would come from the governing bodies of the Convention. Instead of ‘questions were asked’, the text could read ‘the working group recommends that the relation between the elements of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and the practices to be found on the platform be clarified’.
122. The **delegation of Austria** agreed.
123. The **delegation of Belgium** said it was not completely happy with the new proposal. It had made a comment several times regarding the practices on the Register that were no longer active, but the comment had not been reflected.
124. The **Chairperson** said the wording was still being discussed and asked whether anyone wanted to comment.
125. The **delegation of Panama** congratulated the Chairperson for his work and commented that the language sounded a bit unclear.
126. The **Secretary** said this had to do with the two versions of the sentence. One was ‘while the working group noticed that this was a worthy proposal, some raised questions about the financing of the implementation and maintenance costs… which will need to be addressed’. The other was ‘While the working group noticed that this was a worthy proposal, the financing of the implementation and maintenance costs of such a platform will need to be addressed’.
127. The **Chairperson** asked the delegation of Panama if it was happy with that.
128. The **delegation of Panama** said yes.
129. The **Secretary** said there was a further amendment and read out a new proposal from the delegation of Belgium, suggesting the addition of ‘hopes and suggestions were expressed to find solutions’, which would enable the deletion of ‘which will need to be addressed’.
130. The **delegation of Czechia** said it had not heard suggestions on how funding could be addressed, so it was not comfortable adding that to the text.
131. The **delegation of Belgium** shared some suggestions, including finding partners, working with NGOs, and mixed solutions combining UNESCO and other collaborators.
132. The **Chairperson** asked for more suggestions from the floor.
133. The **delegation of Czechia** said it didn’t have any more suggestions. Perhaps that level of detail was not helpful, and paragraph 10 of document [LHE/23/18.COM WG ART18/4 Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_WG_ART18-4_REV_EN.docx)should be read in conjunction with paragraph 12, which spoke about the request made by this working group concerning the Secretary’s proposal.
134. The **Chairperson** said there was consensus in the room. Paragraphs 9 and 10 were adopted. He noted that there was an amendment from the delegation of Sweden on a new paragraph 12.
135. The **delegation of the Netherlands** noted that the observers had requested the floor regarding the previous paragraph and should be given the opportunity to speak.
136. The **ICH NGO Forum** had a small suggestion for paragraph 10. It thought the word ‘elements’ should be replaced by ‘safeguarding practices’, ‘items’, or ‘projects, programmes and activities’, to avoid referring to wording used for the Urgent Safeguarding List.
137. The **Chairperson** thanked the ICH NGO Forum for a good point. He then opened the floor for comments on paragraph 11 (the old paragraph 10) beginning with the chapeau.
138. The **delegation of Tunisia** suggested adding the country focal points for the 2003 Convention to the people concerned by the platform.
139. The **Secretary** said the reason country focal points were not mentioned here was that they were not a prerequisite for the 2003 Convention, quite unlike the 2005 Convention in which this was a requirement. He suggested adding ‘and the country focal points for the 2003 Convention, when and where they are designated’.
140. The **delegation of Tunisia** said that was clear.
141. The **Chairperson** moved the discussion on to the bullet points under paragraph 11.
142. The **ICH NGO Forum** suggested the wording needed to be changed. The use of the word ‘by’ before ‘elements’ made the sentence ‘concerned by elements’ unclear. ‘With’ was preferable, as this new phrasing gave the sentence an unfortunate meaning in English.
143. The **Secretary** agreed that the normal language is not ‘concerned’, the language had been a little rushed.
144. The **delegation of Romania** said it wanted to make the same comment as the Observer and thanked the ICH NGO Forum for noticing the issue.
145. The **Chairperson** suggested ‘as well as contact persons for elements already inscribed’. He noted that there were no more additions on the first and second bullet point, then passed the floor to the delegation of Ukraine.
146. The **delegation of Ukraine** said that it had sent an amendment concerning the third bullet point. In view of the severe consequences of the Russian war against Ukraine, and the threat to living heritage as well as to communities and individuals bearing the practices, it was important to use the potential of Article 18 as a response mechanism. The paragraph should also call attention to safeguarding living heritage in emergency situations, as well as protecting the bearers of such practices.
147. The **Chairperson** asked the delegation of Ukraine to read out the amendment.
148. The **delegation of Ukraine** read out: ‘to share experiences and to call attention to safeguarding living heritage in emergency situations as well as to support the bearers of such practices’.
149. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections to the proposal by the delegation of Ukraine, and no objections or comments on the fourth bullet point. Paragraph 11 was adopted as a whole. He opened the floor for comments on paragraph 12. The chapeau and paragraph 12(a) were adopted. For paragraph 12(b), there was a proposal from the delegation of Palestine to use ‘for’ as had been done in previous paragraphs, and an amendment by the delegation of Sweden.
150. Regarding paragraph 12(b), the **delegation of Sweden** proposed that the ICH NGO Forum be explicitly mentioned as an actor on the platform, as they played a vital role in the implementation of the Convention and Article 18.
151. The **Chairperson** checked whether there were any other changes or additions. Paragraph 12(b) was adopted with the changes from the delegations of Palestine and Sweden. He opened the floor on paragraph 12(c).
152. Regarding paragraph 12(c), the **delegation of Belgium** wished to avoid the phrase ‘identified at the national level’.
153. The **Secretary** suggested ‘identified within States Parties’.
154. The **Chairperson** checked that there were no objections to the text with the changes suggested by the delegation of Belgium. Paragraph 13(c) was adopted. He then checked whether there were any objections to the paragraph as a whole. With no objections, paragraph 12 was adopted in its entirety. The Chairperson then opened the floor for suggestions and comments on paragraph 13.
155. The **delegation of Belgium** asked whether there was only one plan A, or also a plan B, C and D. *What kind of plan did the Secretariat foresee, or did it foresee several options?*
156. The **Secretary** said it would be one detailed plan for establishing an online platform, including administrative setup and financial and operational implications. It would also include options, and these would depend on financing possibilities. There was currently some uncertainty around budgets, but the Secretariat would look at the best possible options.
157. The **delegation of Czechia** recalled that the delegation of Brazil had requested that the Secretariat provide possible funding options, but this was not yet reflected in paragraph 13. It suggested adding ‘and other possible financing options’ at the end of the sentence.
158. The **delegation of Palestine** wanted to add to the delegation of Czechia’s comment, ‘as well as expected financial and operational implications’.
159. The **Chairperson** checked that there was no opposition to the amendments suggested by the delegations of Palestine and Czechia. Paragraph 13 was adopted. He then opened the floor for Topic 3: Any other issues. With no comments on paragraph 14, it was adopted. Paragraphs 15 and 16 were also adopted with no comments or amendments. The Chairperson moved on to the amendment received from the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
160. The **delegation of Germany** explained that the purpose of the amendment was to increase the motivation of communities and groups to hand in proposals for the Register, as well as to promote the difference between it and the Representative list and to promote exchange programmes for bearers of intangible cultural heritage on safeguarding practices. Such exchange programmes could enable bearers to learn from each other, face to face. They could be funded by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, which was not being used to its full extent. This could help implement the genuine intention behind Article 18, as well as make it more attractive for communities to apply to the Register.
161. The **delegation of Belgium** said that, while the proposal was interesting, it did not think that intangible cultural heritage elements were inscribed on the Register, and it caused confusion to have that included there. In addition, paragraph 9.c of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) already allowed for these kinds of programmes. Perhaps attention should be drawn to that.
162. The **delegation of Norway** supported the suggestion by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland.
163. The **delegation of Algeria** preferred not to mention the Fund, since the Fund was mainly there to protect the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and the Urgent Safeguarding List. The delegation was not against encouraging exchanges and applications for the Register, or indeed to the other Lists, but preferred not to reference the Fund.
164. The **delegation of Switzerland** confirmed that the comment by the delegation of Belgium was correct: for the Register it was not elements, but programmes that were inscribed. It suggested editing the text in line with that comment. Regarding the Fund, the current system enabled the financing of such programmes, so the amendment was not creating any new financial obligations.
165. The **delegation of Saudi Arabia** supported the amendment by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland. It suggested adding ‘such’ before ‘ICH elements listed in the Register’.
166. The **delegation of Slovakia** said that to stay with the wording, it suggested changing ‘nominations’ to ‘proposals’. The delegation supported the amendment by the delegations of Germany and Switzerland, with the explanations by the delegations of Belgium and Switzerland.
167. The **Secretary** said he was not aware of a financing mechanism of the Fund currently dedicated to exchange programmes or having been used for that purpose. He suggested the wording ‘appropriate funding’.
168. The **Chairperson** said perhaps that could be looked into.
169. The **delegation of Kazakhstan** was in favour of the proposal by the delegations of Germany, Switzerland and Slovakia regarding exchanging experiences, but wanted the Secretariat to clarify on the comment by the delegation of Belgium (paragraph 301) regarding whether or not a mechanism existed. If so, the paragraph may not be needed. If not, perhaps the working group could recommend looking into this issue in the future.
170. The **delegation of Algeria** said it had never seen such a use of the Fund. The elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List were those in most need of the Fund, and they should not be deprived of any possible funding. If colleagues did not object, the delegation wanted to support the amendment, but without the reference to the Fund.
171. The **delegation of Viet Nam** said that because the existence of this mechanism was unclear, perhaps the words ‘if appropriate or applicable’ could be added at the end of the paragraph.
172. The **delegation of Belgium** said the Secretary was right: the mechanism hadn’t been used yet. He invited the working group to look at paragraph 9.c of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf), where the possibility was opened. Articles 21 and 21.b of the Convention stated it could be used for practitioners.
173. The **Secretary** suggested that saying participants could make use of the International Assistance mechanism would reflect the current situation and might alleviate some of the concerns around the Fund’s priorities. A reference to paragraph 9.c of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) may also help solve this.
174. The **delegation of Switzerland** said that, in agreement with the delegation of Germany, it was ready to give up on the last part, while indicating that possibility. Paragraph 67(b) of the [Operational Directives](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2022_version-EN_.pdf) and Article 18 of the Convention also mentioned proposals, so there was no need to add that here. It would follow the delegation of Algeria.
175. The **delegation of Tunisia** said it had concerns about the world ‘practitioners’ because safeguarding included more than just practitioners. It suggested replacing it with ‘communities’.
176. The **delegation of Algeria** thanked colleagues for the spirit of consensus and said it supported the paragraph as it had been edited.
177. The **delegation of Tunisia** supported that option.
178. The **delegation of Belgium** felt the formulation was not precise enough because there were no communities listed on the Register. It did not think the text was finalized yet.
179. The **Secretary** reminded the working group that this was a recommendation rather than a text to be adopted. He suggested ‘associate practitioners of the Register’s good safeguarding practices’.
180. The **delegation of Switzerland** wished to be precise and in line with the wording of the Convention, and suggested ‘communities, groups or individuals involved in programmes, projects or activities for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices’.
181. The **delegation of Saudi Arabia** wished to be added to the list of countries in support of the amendment.
182. The **Chairperson** thanked the delegation and said a consensus had been reached for the paragraph. Paragraph 17 was adopted. The recommendations were adopted as a whole. The Chairman thanked the working group for an efficient and productive meeting. Consensus had been reached on a set of recommendations that would be further examined at the eighteenth session of the Committee meeting in December 2023. He thanked the working group for electing him as Chairperson and thanked the members of the Bureau and the Vice‑chairpersons Estonia, Peru, Philippines, Angola and Morocco for their contributions and support in preparing the draft recommendations. He also thanked the technicians, interpreters, and Secretariat who had made the meeting possible. The Chairperson then closed the session.

*[Close of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group meeting]*