

Intervention 14.COM 15: Reflection on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention (Bogotá, 14 December 2019)

Presented by Naila Ceribašić (International Council for Traditional Music) on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum and its Steering Committee

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving us the floor.

Advisory functions

Let me first to address the issue of advisory functions that the Committee wishes accredited NGOs to fulfill.

Apart from serving in the Evaluation Body, the ICH NGO Forum has identified seven additional groups of functions. They have been listed in the Art. 3 of the Forum's Bylaws adopted three days ago, on 11 December at our General Meeting. The adopted Bylaws, as well as the Code of Conduct have been delivered to the Secretariat and through this channel are available for your consideration.

Let me to mention just one of these seven groups of functions that we have identified. It is "to advise the Intergovernmental Committee on specific thematic issues, and participate in reporting and monitoring on inscribed ICH elements and safeguarding practices". We already work on such topics. For instance, ICH in urban context was addressed last Sunday at our symposium, and currently we work on the preparation of the next symposium on ICH and sustainable tourism, including also the creation of guidelines and a toolkit for all stakeholders, especially communities. We also plan to produce a report on the state of safeguarding ICH in Latin America and the Caribbean, with an emphasis on the role of NGOs in safeguarding processes. This will contribute to the overall report on the safeguarding in the region, which will be at the agenda of the next Committee meeting.

So, speaking from the perspective of ICH NGO Forum, in the period from April this year, when the Consultation meeting took place, until now, we may conclude that a "clear consensus emerged" (cf. Document LHE-19-14.COM-15, para. 9) within the Forum regarding the identification of *inter alia* advisory functions.

We have also created and adopted the Code of Conduct, as expected from us following the Consultation meeting in April.

"Disparity in size and capacities of accredited NGOs"

As for the "the disparity in size and capacities of accredited NGOs", addressed in paragraph 9 of the Secretariat's report, we consider it as a direct and necessary reality in response to the variety and diversity of communities, groups and individuals that we serve; yet keeping in mind complications that such variations may present in the assessment of NGOs' contributions, and consequently in the accreditation system.

Accreditation and re-accreditation

Since the Consultation meeting in April until now, the Forum has not reach any particular proposal concerning the accreditation and reaccreditation system and its possible revision.

An umbrella organization

Further on, referring to paragraph 15 of the report, the ICH NGO Forum is *an already existing umbrella association* that encourages plurality of expertise, and fair and equal

participation among different NGOs and regions, in contrast to the concerns expressed at the Consultation meeting in April and in the related report. Therefore, we wish to reaffirm that the Forum advocates and operates in favour of plurality, diversity and participation.

Geographical imbalance

We completely share the concern of the General Assembly, the Committee and the Secretariat regarding “the unbalanced geographical distribution of accredited NGOs” (para. 16). We also agree that the way out is “to foster the accreditation of NGOs based in under-represented regions”. On how to accomplish this, we are of the opinion that capacity-building workshops in such regions would be of crucial importance, as pointed out in our intervention on the agenda item 7.

Therefore, we very much appreciate the proposed draft decision, paragraph 6, related to the organization of capacity-building activities.

Mapping of NGOs

As well, we appreciate the proposed draft decision, paragraph 5, related to the request to the Secretariat to develop a mapping of NGOs’ domains of competence and their capacities. We hope the ICH NGO Forum will also be invited to take an active role in that process.

The above statement was followed by reponse to questions raised by the members of the Committee in their debate on this agenda item, in particular as regards the issues of geographical imbalance and the introduction of the Forum’s report as a separate agenda item at the Committee’s sessions.