

## ICH NGO FORUM BYLAWS

(Draft October 7, 2019)

### SECTION I – NAME AND PURPOSE

- Article 1: The name of the organization shall be ICH NGO Forum.
- Article 2: The ICH NGO Forum is an association of NGOs accredited to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the Convention) to act in an advisory capacity to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (the Intergovernmental Committee).
- Article 3: The ICH NGO Forum, *inter alia*, shall serve as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about ICH; act as a platform for networking and cooperation among ICH NGOs; foster ethical principles and participation of civil society for the safeguarding of ICH; provide resources, reports and information about safeguarding practices to UNESCO, states parties, communities, practitioners and other ICH stakeholders; contribute to the capacity-building programme and to experience-sharing on good safeguarding practices, including through the publication of the journal *#HeritageAlive*; advise the Intergovernmental Committee on specific thematic issues, and participate in reporting and monitoring on inscribed ICH elements and safeguarding practices.
- Article 4: The ICH NGO Forum shall adopt its internal policies, including a code of conduct of the ICH NGO Forum and a model code of conduct for NGOs accredited to the Convention.

### SECTION II – MEMBERSHIP

- Article 5: Any NGO accredited to the Convention shall be considered a member of the ICH NGO Forum.
- Article 6: Each NGO accredited to the Convention shall appoint one voting representative to the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum. Other members of accredited NGOs, as well as non-accredited NGOs and any other stakeholders engaged in ICH safeguarding may take part in ICH NGO Forum meetings and the General Assembly, but are not eligible to vote.

### SECTION III – MEETINGS AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Article 7: The annual meeting of ICH NGO Forum shall occur at the time and venue of the annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee. The General Assembly of the membership shall occur during the annual meeting at the date and time to be determined by the Steering Committee.
- Article 8: Other meetings may be called by a simple majority of the Steering Committee.
- Article 9: Notice of each meeting and the General Assembly shall be given on the website of the ICH NGO Forum, <http://www.ngoforum.org>, and by email, not less than four weeks prior to the meeting.
- Article 10: The quorum for transaction of business at the General Assembly shall consist of 10 voting members of accredited NGOs.
- Article 11: A majority vote of those voting is necessary to transact any business brought before the membership, other than the election of Steering Committee members that is conducted by plurality vote.
- Article 12: The meetings will address topics of relevance to the purposes of the ICH NGO Forum. Their programme shall be coordinated by the Steering Committee.
- Article 13: The General Assembly shall examine and approve the annual report on the Forum's programmes, services and partnerships, annual financial report, and annual plan of the Forum's activities.
- Article 14: Each member NGO, represented by one voting delegate, shall have the right to propose and second resolutions, to take part in discussions, approve and amend the agenda for the General Assembly, and to vote.
- Article 15: Meetings and the General Assembly will be held, and reports will be published, in English and/or French.

#### **SECTION IV – STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Article 16: The Steering Committee acts as the governing body for the ICH NGO Forum. It is responsible for overall policy and direction of the Forum and manages its operations, finances, administration, and affairs. Throughout the year, it oversees communication around Forum's activities through, amongst other means, the newsletter, website, and social media sites.
- Article 17: The Steering Committee's mission is to coordinate, for the benefit of the accredited NGOs, the activities of the Forum, including but not limited to:
- liaison with UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention for collective matters dealing with civil society organizations, and especially

accredited NGOs;

- coordinate activities of the ICH NGO Forum at the time of sessions of the Convention's governing organs (General Assembly of the States Parties, and Intergovernmental Committee);
- in a spirit of transparency and good governance, develop communication around the Forum activities, including those of the Steering Committee such as communicating minutes of its meetings, invitations, etc.;
- develop the network of accredited ICH NGOs, including facilitation of dialogue, and exchange of information and best practices;
- initiate thematic activities through, amongst others, the organization of workshops;
- organize capacity building activities, which may be carried out in coordination with UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention;
- coordinate dialogue and initiatives with States Parties or other entities designed to foster financial sustainability of collective activities of accredited NGOs;
- manage funds that have been raised for the Forum's activities;
- promote participation of civil society for the safeguarding of ICH.

Article 18: No less than four weeks prior to the General Assembly, the Steering Committee shall prepare an annual report on the Forum's programmes, services and partnerships; annual financial report, including the sources of funding, the use of funds, and explanation of any significant variations between budgeted and actual revenues and expenses; and annual plan of the Forum's activities that is concordant with available resources. All three documents shall be submitted to the General Assembly for its examination and approval.

Article 19: No member of the Steering Committee shall participate in deciding a matter directly impacting that individual. Each member of the Steering Committee shall disclose in writing all potential and actual conflicts of interest in a signed conflict of interest statement.

Article 20: Membership of the Steering Committee shall consist of seven members serving two-year terms, with eligibility for re-election for no more than one additional consecutive term. Their election shall be conducted on the basis of the electoral groups of UNESCO (Western Europe and North America, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Africa), each representing an NGO with headquarters in the listed six regions, and one member representing an international NGO

(understood as NGOs active in two or more electoral groups of UNESCO). In the absence of candidates from NGOs with headquarters in the region concerned, the seat will be open to candidates from NGOs with headquarters elsewhere but with main activities situated in the region concerned, and, in the absence of such candidates, to candidates from international NGOs active in the region concerned. The election of one member from each of three regions occurs every year.

- Article 21: Members of the official delegation of a state party may not be elected to the Steering Committee. If a member of the Steering Committee becomes a member of official delegation of a state party in the course of his or her service in the Steering Committee, membership in the Steering Committee will be terminated.
- Article 22: The Steering Committee receives no compensation other than reimbursement of reasonable expenses, if such funds are available and so designated.
- Article 23: All other policies and procedures for election to the Steering Committee shall be determined by the Election Board.
- Article 24: An Election Board, preferably composed of seven members (one from each UNESCO electoral group and one from an international NGO), and in any case a minimum of three members, will make a call to accredited NGOs for Steering Committee candidatures, at least six weeks prior to each General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum. The General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum will nominate members of the Election Board one year prior to the elections. In the absence of this Election Board, a month and a half prior to the date of the Forum General meeting, the Steering Committee will make a call to all accredited NGOs for candidatures. Members of the Election Board cannot be candidates to the Steering Committee. Each member of the Election Board will serve no longer than three consecutive years.
- Article 25: The Steering Committee shall meet every month through any shared means of telecommunication, and also during the sessions of the Convention's governing bodies. Meetings will be conducted in English and/or French. Minutes of each meeting are to be produced, and made available to the member NGOs and general public, and archived for further use. Steering Committee members must have written notice of official meetings at least five days in advance. Meetings with the UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention are to be held at least twice a year whenever possible.
- Article 26: A quorum must be attended by simple majority of members of the Steering Committee before motions can be made or passed.

Article 27: There shall be four officers of the Steering Committee, consisting of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The officers, who shall constitute the Executive Committee, shall be decided upon by the Steering Committee during the week of their meeting at the session of the Intergovernmental Committee.

The Chair of the Steering Committee shall serve a term of one year and cannot be renewed. The position of chair will rotate each year among the electoral regions and international organization representative. The Chair is responsible for convening Steering Committee meetings and presiding during these meetings.

The Vice-Chair will serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair.

The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Steering Committee actions, including overseeing the taking of minutes at all Steering Committee meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to all Steering Committee members, and assuring that ongoing ICH NGO records are maintained.

The Treasurer shall report on finances at each Steering Committee meeting, assist in the preparation of the budget, help develop fundraising plans, disburse funds and sign checks, and make financial information available to Steering Committee members, ICH NGO membership and the public.

Article 28: Resignation from the Steering Committee must be in writing and received by the Secretary. If an accredited NGO notifies the Steering Committee that the person serving on the Committee no longer represents their organization, the person is no longer eligible to a Steering Committee member. A Steering Committee member shall be dropped for excess absences from the Steering Committee meetings if he or she has three unexcused absences from the meetings in a year.

Article 29: Vacancies occurring on the Steering Committee may be filled at any time by appointment of the Chair with approval of two-thirds of the Steering Committee. The person filling the vacant position must be from the same region as the person who vacated the position, or in the case of a representative from an international organization, from an international organization. The appointment will be until the next election for Steering Committee members.

## **SECTION V – WORKING GROUPS**

Article 30: There shall be provision for Working Groups organized around areas of ICH interests, policies, practices and research. Working Groups may, in

coordination with the Steering Committee, organize workshops and other programmes, issue reports, produce recommendations for ICH policies and good safeguarding practices, and produce other types of publications and dedicated pages for the ICH NGO website.

- Article 31: Participation in a Working Group will be open to anyone attending the meetings of ICH NGO Forum.
- Article 32: The Working Groups shall be listed on the website of the ICH NGO Forum.
- Article 33: New Working Groups may be recognized by signed petition of five or more accredited NGOs submitted to and confirmed by the Steering Committee.
- Article 34: Each Working Group shall select a Chair who will convene meetings, serve as the representative to the Steering Committee, and submit annual reports of the Working Group's activities and finances to the Steering Committee and general membership. Each Working Group may define its Chair's terms of office, embodying a principle of rotation. A person can simultaneously serve as a Chair in no more than one Working Group.
- Article 35: The Steering Committee may revoke a Working Group's official status:
- (a) Upon the recommendation of the Working Group itself;
  - b) Upon the recommendation of the majority of the Steering Committee, which shall show cause that the Working Group has been conducted in a manner contrary to the purposes of the ICH NGO Forum;
  - (c) If the Working Group fails to meet at the annual meeting during the session of the Intergovernmental Committee for two consecutive years; or
  - (d) If the Working Group fails to submit annual reports to the Steering Committee in a timely manner.

*These Bylaws were adopted by the General Meeting of the ICH NGO Forum in Bogotá on 11 December 2019, incorporating the previous official document – “ICH NGO Forum Steering Committee: Mission and tasks of the Committee; General profile of members of the Committee and election process” – that was adopted by the General Meeting of the ICH NGO Forum in 2016 and amended in 2017. These Bylaws may be amended when necessary by a two-thirds majority of the Steering Committee and approved by a two-thirds majority of designated representatives of accredited NGOs present at the General Assembly of the ICH NGO Forum.*