

First Session of the Subsidiary Committee of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 2 and 3 July 2013

Folarin Shyllon

Following the election of the Subsidiary Committee by the Extraordinary meeting of the States Parties to the 1970 Convention, which took place on 1 July 2013, the first session of the Subsidiary Committee took place from 2 to 3 July 2013. This committee will be convened every year. The 18 members of the committee are Bulgaria, Chad, Croatia, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, and Turkey. The members of the committee were elected for a four-year term. Every two years, the Meeting of States Parties will renew half of the members of the committee. However, the term of office of half of the members elected at the first election is limited to two years. The nine members drawn by lots by the chairperson of the Extraordinary Meeting of States Parties on 1 July 2013 are Chad, China, Croatia, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, and Turkey.

The functions of the Committee are:

- To promote the objectives of the Convention;
- To review the national reports submitted to the General Conference by the States Parties to the Convention;
- To share good practices, prepare and submit to the Meeting of States parties recommendations and guidelines that can help in implementing the Convention;

Email: foshyllon@gmail.com

- To identify difficult situations resulting from the implementation of the Convention, including topics regarding the protection and return of cultural property;
- To establish and maintain coordination with the “Return and Restitution Committee” in connection with capacity-building measures to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property;
- To inform the Meeting of States Parties of the activities that have been implemented.

The meeting was opened by Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General for Culture. The election of the bureau was then conducted.

Chairperson: Mauricio Escanero (Mexico)
Vice-Chairs: Bulgaria, China, Egypt, and Nigeria
Rapporteur: Artemis Papathanassiou (Greece)

The chairperson outlined the work ahead and sought the cooperation of the committee members in carrying out the tasks. The agenda was then adopted.

The two issues for the committee at this first session were the adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the Subsidiary Committee and consideration of the draft Operational Guidelines. After very extensive debate, the Rules of Procedure were adopted. With regard to the draft Operational Guidelines, the committee was assisted by the study prepared by Lyndel Prott, a former director of UNESCO’s Division of Cultural Heritage. The committee proceeded to a first global reading of the draft guidelines. It then decided to establish an informal working group of all 18 members of the Subsidiary Committee under the coordination of the chairperson to work on the draft guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 Convention and on other relevant items in preparation of the next Subsidiary Committee session. The final results of this informal working group will be submitted to the next session of the Subsidiary Committee for possible adoption. All its members and observers were invited to provide to the chairperson written inputs by 15 October 2013 to be considered in the informal working group.

The committee expressed its gratitude to the States Parties—China, Greece, Switzerland, and Turkey—that contributed financially to the organization of the session. It also decided to consider at its second session the possibility and the modalities of establishing a fund to support the implementation of the 1970 Convention.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

UNESCO, Document C70/13/1.SC/Decisions, Paris, 24 July 2013.