

DRAFT DECISION 16.COM 8.b.9

The Committee

1. Takes note that Denmark has nominated **Inuit drum dancing and singing** (no. 01696) for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

Drum dancing and drum singing are indigenous forms of Inuit artistic expression and music in Greenland. Drum dances and songs are frequently performed during national holidays, festive celebrations and social events, by a single person or a group. A single drum dancer may also perform with a choir. During a drum dance, the performer lightly bends his or her knees, leaning slightly forward. The drum, or *qilaat*, is lifted and lowered in different directions and a stick made of bone or wood is struck rhythmically against the frame of the drum to produce a sharp, echoing, percussive beat. The drum song is a lyrical narration that provides a melodious accompaniment to the monotonous beat of the drum. Drum songs often touch on the experiences and activities of daily life in Greenland, and common topics include love, longing, humour and hunting. For Greenlandic Inuit, drum dancing and singing embodies a shared identity and a sense of community as well as a means of creating continuity between the past and the present. The practices are perceived as symbols of equity and equality in Greenland and are universally recognized as belonging to everyone, regardless of age, gender, social status or political views.

2. Considers that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

R.1: It is widespread in Greenland and is an essential part of the identity of the Inuit of Greenland, involved in forming a sense of community, heritage, and shared history and future. The performances are lyrical, usually related to everyday topics that are important to people's lives. The participants and performers come from different social strata, and transmission takes place informally through cultural associations and clubs. There are also formal modes of transmission all over Greenland, through institutions such as the National Theatre of Greenland, amateur theatre associations and dance studios. Socially, the element is a symbol of equality and equity. Certain songs are specific to gender, but anyone can learn the practice regardless of age or gender.

R.2: The inscription of the element will encourage a sense of belonging and contribute to local interest in safeguarding other forms of intangible cultural heritage concerning Inuit practices. At the national level, it will increase public awareness about Greenland's intangible cultural heritage in general and help to institutionalize its importance and significance. At the international level, the inscription can draw attention to living heritage associated with drumming elements as well as to the cultures of the Inuit communities in different countries. The inscription will further enhance collaborations with practitioners of other music genres such as jazz, rap and indie rock, thereby promoting respect for cultural diversity and fostering creativity.

R.3: Local community, groups and individuals were engaged in different safeguarding activities, including research and documentation, an ongoing three-year program, annual festivals, development and dissemination of school materials, and educational films. The State Party will coordinate efforts of other institutes and provide funding to implement the safeguarding measures, which have been proposed by the relevant communities, associations and individual practitioners who will also be involved in their implementation.

R.4: The State demonstrated that Inuit drum dancing and singing has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, groups and individuals

concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent. The process of preparing the nomination began in December 2017 and was initiated by the museum. Attached to the Inuit drum dancing and singing nomination are documents containing information about the personal, social and cultural significance of the element, its manifestations in the life of the communities and wishes for the inscription. There are no proscriptive customs or secrecy involved with Inuit drum dancing and singing, there are no customary practices restricting access to the element.

R.5: The element is listed on *Erigisassat tigussaannigitsut* – Cherished intangible culture, the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greenland. The element was included in the inventory in 2011 before it was documented with the support of the communities, groups and practitioners. The element is actively updated as information is available through dialogue with the community.

3. Decides to inscribe **Inuit drum dancing and singing** on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity;
4. Commends the State Party for its first inscription;
5. Further commends the State Party for ensuring wide participation of the relevant communities, groups and individuals in the safeguarding of the element.