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APPEALS BY MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THEIR PROPOSALS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF ANNIVERSARIES WITH WHICH UNESCO COULD BE ASSOCIATED IN 2008-2009

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 159 EX/Decision 7.5, the Director-General submits to the Executive Board revised proposals from Member States for the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated in 2008-2009.

Decision proposed: paragraph 16.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to the procedure adopted in 159 EX/Decision 7.5 (159th session of the Executive Board, May 2000) for establishing the list of anniversaries proposed by Member States with which UNESCO could be associated, the Member States concerned have had a statutory period of two months since the last session of the Executive Board in order to reformulate, should they so desire, their requests concerning anniversaries that were rejected by the Executive Board at its 176th session. This option applied solely to proposals submitted before 15 January 2007.

2. Seventeen appeals have thus been submitted to the Secretariat by 12 Member States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Poland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Romania, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine.

3. The Secretariat's intersectoral selection committee has considered all the requests and the Executive Board is now called upon to examine the list of reformulated proposals deemed admissible inasmuch as they comply with the following selection criteria, established by 159 EX/Decision 7.5:

- (a) each proposed anniversary should be indisputably linked to the Organization's ideals and missions in the fields of education, science, culture, social and human sciences and communication and should promote closer relations among peoples, tolerance, and the ideals of peace, cultural dialogue and mutual understanding among peoples;
- (b) commemorations of the birth, independence or institutional regime of a State will not be eligible for consideration; similarly the anniversaries of military events will be excluded;
- (c) the anniversary should concern personalities of genuinely universal stature and works or events of genuinely worldwide or at least regional significance in order to reflect the ideals, the values, the cultural diversity and the universality of the Organization;
- (d) the anniversary should be a fiftieth anniversary, a centenary, or a multiple thereof; some flexibility should nevertheless be used in applying this criterion;
- (e) the anniversary should be the occasion for nationwide events already planned and for the organization of which certain resources have been allocated in the Member State or group of Member States directly concerned;
- (f) any anniversary proposal involving more than one State should be submitted by all.

4. The Director-General submits to the Executive Board, for its decision, the reformulated proposals contained in section II, which contains a description of each anniversary selected, together with relevant historical and biographical information.

5. Furthermore, in view of all of the proposals received concerning the celebration of anniversaries, the Director-General requests the Executive Board to authorize him to revise the criteria for examining proposals for the celebration of anniversaries, in order to refine them further and establish procedures that are more appropriate for the celebration of works of the oral and intangible heritage in particular and to submit the new criteria to it for decision at its 179th session.

II. MEMBER STATES' REQUESTS DEEMED ADMISSIBLE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

6. **The Armenian National Commission for UNESCO, with the support of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO**, requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **100th anniversary of the birth of Victor HAMBARDZUMYAN, astronomer and astrophysicist (1908-1996), in 2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and

the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

He was one of the pioneers of theoretical astrophysics; he worked on the cosmogony of stars and galaxies, stellar dynamics, and gaseous nebulae. In 1947 he discovered stellar associations. He was the first to suggest that T Tauri stars are very young and to propose that nearby stellar associations are expanding. He also showed that evolutionary processes such as mass loss are occurring in galaxies; worked on interstellar matter, radio galaxies, and active galactic nuclei. (SC)

7. **The Armenian National Commission for UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **100th anniversary of the birth of William Saroyan, writer (1908-1981)**, in **2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

William Saroyan was an American author, novelist and playwright of Armenian origin, whose stories celebrated optimism in the middle of trials and difficulties of the Depression era. Several of Saroyan's works were drawn from his own experiences, although his approach to autobiographical facts can be called poetic, therefore many of his plays and short stories are about growing up impoverished as the son of Armenian immigrants. These stories were popular during the Great Depression. Saroyan grew up in Fresno, the centre of Armenian-Americans in California, where many of his works are set. He worked tirelessly to perfect a prose style that was full of zest for life and was seemingly impressionistic. The style became known as "Saroyanesque". Among Saroyan's best known plays is "The time of your life" (1939) which won a Pulitzer Prize. Saroyan refused the honour but accepted the New York Drama Critics Circle award. The short story collection "My name is Aram" (1940) is an international bestseller. It has been translated into many languages. (CLT)

8. **The Permanent Delegation of Azerbaijan to UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **100th anniversary of the first opera in the East: "Leyli and Majnun"**, in **2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

The opera "Leyli and Majnun" was premiered in the Taghiyev Theater in Baku on 12 January 1908. The work became identified as the "First Opera of the Muslim East". The plot, based on an immortal love story, can best be compared to "Romeo and Juliet", though in the oral tradition the legend of "Leyli and Majnun" predates Shakespeare by more than a thousand years.

Uzeyir Hajibeyov (1885-1948) was the composer of this opera. He was 22 at the time of its premiere. He and his younger brother, Jeyhun (1891-1962), wrote the libretto based on the poetic rendition of "Leyli and Majnun" by the Azerbaijani poet Fuzuli (1480-1562). Many of the verses were kept in their original form.

The "Leyli and Majnun" opera is based on traditional Azerbaijani mughams, which are performed in their original form. Entire segments of the opera feature specific mughams, depending on the emotional effect the composer was trying to convey. The mughams called Mahur-Hindi, Segah, Chahargah, Kurd-Shahnaz, Bayati-Shiraz, Shushtar, Bayati-Kurd, Shabi-Hijran and Gatar are among those featured in this opera. (CLT)

9. **The Bulgarian National Commission for UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **100th anniversary of the birth of Marin Goleminov, musician (1908-2000)**, in **2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria

adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Teacher, violinist, composer and conductor, Marin Goleminov (1908-2000) composed numerous works that have their roots in the melody, metres and rhythm of Bulgarian folk music. His work initiated a music movement in Bulgarian culture marked by the use of Bulgarian traditional music elements interwoven with an original style and vision. He educated generations of Bulgarians. He studied in different countries, Bulgaria, France and Germany. Since 1943, and for over four decades, he had taught music instruments, orchestration, conducting and composition at the State Academy of Music in Sofia. He was elected Rector (1954-1956) and Director of the Sofia Opera (1965-1967). He won the Gottfried von Herder Award of the Vienna University (1976). He joined the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and was promoted to Academician (1989). He died on 19 February 2000 in Espinho, Portugal. His influence spread throughout the region. (CLT)

10. **The Permanent Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **400th anniversary of the death of Sheikh-e Bahae, calligrapher, mathematician, astronomer, doctor, architect and poet (1531-1609), in 2009**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Sheikh-e Bahae's fame was due to his excellent command of mathematics, architecture and astronomy. He is considered to be one of the founders of Islamic architecture. The construction of the Meidan Emam in Esfahan, which is inscribed on the World Heritage List, was based on his plans. He also made a sun clock, which is located in the Western part of the Imam Mosque. He was mentioned in many scientific publications in the field of mathematics and geometry. (SC)

11. **The Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan to UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **500th anniversary of the epos "Kyz Zhibek", in 2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Kyz-Zhibek is a poetic folk legend of the sixteenth century. It tells about the period in Kazakh history when people suffered from bloody feuds. In those times each province of the Kazakh nation had its own leader and each tried to supersede the other. The love story of Tolegen, the brave warrior, and the beauty Zhibek ends tragically because of inter-family strife. Tolegen is foully murdered by Bekejan (the batyr, or nobleman, of the rival family), who earlier strove for the hand of Zhibek. Zhibek commits suicide after learning about the death of Tolegen. The epos "Kyz Zhibek" is doubtless a precious element of intangible cultural heritage.¹ Sixteen variants of the legend exist in different parts of Kazakhstan. (CLT)

12. **The Polish National Commission for UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **50th anniversary of the beginning of Jerzy Grotowski's artistic work by the creation of Laboratory Theatre, in 2009**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and

¹ Although it is recommended that this anniversary be included in the list of celebrations with which UNESCO will be associated in 2008-2009, it is important to note that oral traditions do not come into being on a specific date or in a particular year, but incorporate older oral traditions. The nature of intangible heritage, as constantly transmitted and re-created, is contradicted by an attempt to freeze its form and assign a birthdate. To prevent further misunderstanding and facilitate decisions on similar proposals in the future, UNESCO will draw up new criteria for the celebration of anniversaries of works of the intangible heritage.

proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999), Polish theatre director, theoretician and writer, was one of the greatest reformers of twentieth-century theatre, especially in the field of acting. In 1959 he created the theatre laboratory led in cooperation with Flaszen. J. Grotowski's research undertaken in the Laboratory Theatre had a definitive impact on contemporary theatre at an international level, more particularly through the investigation of the nature of acting, its phenomenon as well as its meaning, Jerzy Grotowski created the concept and the artistic form of "Poor Theatre" in which the mental, the physical and emotional processes are intensively put forward. (CLT)

13. **The Permanent Delegation of Romania to UNESCO, supported by the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Moldova**, requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **300th anniversary of the death of Nicolae Spătaru MILESCU, diplomat, philologist, philosopher, geographer, ethnographer, theologian and writer (1636-1708), in 2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Nicolae Spătaru Milescu (1636-1708) was one of the best known and famous scholars of the Romanian Middle Ages, a representative of humanism, philologist, polyglot, theologian and writer. Diplomat at the Court of the Princes of Moldavia and subsequently in Moscow, under the Czar Alexei Mihailovitch, he was the first Romanian to visit China. Drawn from his stay there, his books on "The Empire at the centre of the world" had a major impact on his era and afterwards, by contributing to a better knowledge of China both in Romania and in Europe. His life remains a remarkable and exemplary adventure that benefited human knowledge. A personality of European and universal stature, travelling on roads and rivers then unknown to Europeans, he was an educated and courageous explorer, opening up new windows on the world and on the dialogue between nations and civilizations. Nicolae Spătaru Milescu translated and adapted in Romanian many historical, religious and philosophical works; he was also the author of the first philosophy book written in Romanian. (SHS)

14. **The Turkish Permanent Delegation to UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **1000th anniversary of the birth of Kasgarli Mahmud, linguist (1008-1101), in 2008**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Kasgarli Mahmud was a renowned Turkish linguist, philologist and ethnographer and the first Turkish cartographer of Turkic dialects, who lived in the eleventh century. His most famous work is the book entitled "Divân-ı Lügati't-Türk". The only handwritten copy of the book was found in 1910 in the Fatih Millet Library. In his book, Mahmud tried to prove the richness of Turkish language and its value besides Arabic and Persian. Accordingly, he wrote the grammar book entitled "Kitâbu Cevâhir'ü'n-Nahvi Lügâti't-Türk" to teach Turkish to Arabs. The celebration of this anniversary will encourage further research on Kasgarli Mahmud's significance and major contribution to Turkish culture and language. (CLT)

15. **The Turkish Permanent Delegation to UNESCO** requested that UNESCO should be associated with the **400th anniversary of the birth of Katip Çelebi, scholar (1609-1657), in 2009**. The Director-General considers that this request meets the procedure and the criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, whose description appears hereafter:

Katip Çelebi was a Turkish scholar. Among his chief works is the "*Kashf al-zunun'an asami al-kutub wa al-funun*" which documents some 15,000 books. The best known of his

encyclopaedic contributions is the "*Kashf al-zunnun*", a bibliographical dictionary in the Arab language, with over 14,500 entries in alphabetical order. This work served as a basis for the "Bibliothèque Orientale" by Barthélemy d'Herbelot de Molainville. He was also the author of many works in the fields of geography, history and economics. (SC)

III. DRAFT DECISION

16. At the close of its discussion, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 177 EX/58,
2. Noting that the proposals sent by Member States to the Director-General listed below comply with the criteria adopted in 159 EX/Decision 7.5,
3. Encourages the Member States of all regions to make proposals with a view to ensuring an improved geographical distribution and gender balance;
4. Authorizes the Director-General to revise the criteria and procedures for consideration of the proposals by the Member States concerning the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated and to submit them to it for decision at its 179th session;
5. Recommends to the General Conference:
 - (a) that UNESCO be associated in 2008-2009 with the following celebrations:
 - (1) 100th anniversary of the birth of Victor Hambardzumyan, astronomer and astrophysicist (1908-1996) (Armenia supported by the Russian Federation);
 - (2) 100th anniversary of the birth of William Saroyan, writer (1908-1981) (Armenia);
 - (3) 100th anniversary of the first opera in the East: "Leyli and Majnun" (1908) (Azerbaijan);
 - (4) 100th anniversary of the birth of Marin Goleminov, musician (1908-2000) (Bulgaria);
 - (5) 400th anniversary of the death of Sheikh-e Bahae, calligrapher, mathematician, astronomer, doctor, architect and poet (1531-1609) (Islamic Republic of Iran);
 - (6) 500th anniversary of the epos "Kyz Zhibek" (1508) (Kazakhstan);
 - (7) 50th anniversary of the beginning of Jerzy Grotowski's artistic work by the creation of the Laboratory Theatre (1959) (Poland);
 - (8) 300th anniversary of the death of Nicolae Spătaru Milescu, diplomat, philologist, philosopher, geographer, ethnographer, theologian and writer (1636-1708) (Romania, with the support of the Republic of Moldova);
 - (9) 1000th anniversary of the birth of Kasgarli Mahmud, linguist (1008-1101) (Turkey);

- (10) 400th anniversary of the birth of Katip Çelebi, scholar (1609-1657) (Turkey);
- (b) that the hereby completed list of anniversaries with whose celebration UNESCO will be associated in 2008-2009, which supplements the list contained in 176 EX/Decision 47, be definitively closed, according to the procedure adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session (159 EX/Decision 7.5);
- (c) that any contribution by the Organization to these celebrations will be financed under the Participation Programme, in accordance with the rules governing that programme.

ANNEX

Composition of the Intersectoral Committee established to consider proposals

The Intersectoral Committee established within the Secretariat to consider, in accordance with the criteria and procedures adopted, the list of proposals by the Member States concerning the celebration of anniversaries shall be composed as follows (references: 159 EX/Decision 7.5 and 159 EX/32):

- (a) One focal point from each programme sector
 - Education Sector (ED)
 - Natural Sciences Sector (SC)
 - Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS)
 - Culture Sector (CLT)
 - Communication and Information Sector (CI)

- (b) The relevant units of the Sector for External Relations and Cooperation (ERC)

- (c) A representative of the central services
 - Africa Department (AFR)
 - Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP)
 - Bureau of Field Coordination (BFC)
 - Bureau of Public Information (BPI)
 - Secretariat of the Executive Board (SCX)
 - Secretariat of the General Conference (SCG)



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ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This addendum to document 177 EX/58 contains the most recent developments in relation to this agenda item concerning revised proposals from Member States for the celebration of anniversaries with which UNESCO could be associated in 2008-2009.

Decision proposed: paragraph 8.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the procedure adopted in 159 EX/Decision 7.5 (May 2000) for establishing the list of anniversaries proposed by Member States with which UNESCO could be associated, the Member States concerned have had a statutory period of two months from the end of the last session of the Executive Board to reformulate their requests concerning anniversaries that were not accepted by the Board at its 176th session. This option applied solely to proposals submitted before 15 January 2007.
2. Ten revised requests relating to the celebration of anniversaries in 2008-2009 and deemed admissible inasmuch as they meet the selection criteria set out in 159 EX/Decision 7.5 are thus submitted to the Executive Board in document 177 EX/58.
3. In view of the statutory deadlines governing the consideration of anniversaries, the time allotted for examination by the Intersectoral Selection Committee for Anniversaries and preparation of the document for the Executive Board is very short. Thus, owing to delivery delays, all of the information required in order to examine the appeals lodged by Azerbaijan and Thailand did not reach the Secretariat in time.
4. The Director-General therefore submits to the Executive Board for decision three reformulated requests, which may be added to the list contained in document 177 EX/58. The three requests are set out below, together with the relevant biographical and historic information.

MEMBER STATES' REQUESTS CONSIDERED ADMISSIBLE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

5. The Delegation of Azerbaijan to UNESCO has requested that the Organization be associated with the celebration in 2009 of the **100th anniversary of the birth of Sattar Bahlulzade**, painter (1909-1974). Furthermore, in the light of the Executive Board's recommendation at its 176th session that the General Conference should in principle limit to four the number of anniversary celebrations per Member State for each biennium, Azerbaijan has requested that the celebration of the **100th anniversary of the birth of Mikayil Mushfig, poet (1908-1939), be replaced** by the celebration mentioned above. The Director-General considers that this request complies with the procedure and criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, described below.

Sattar Bahlulzade (1909 - 1974) is the founder of modern Azerbaijani landscape painting. He began his professional education at the National Art Institute in Baku (1927-1931). In 1933, he studied in the Drawing Department at the Moscow Fine Arts Institute. He developed his own impressionist style to express his emotional feeling. Bahlulzade described his own works as paintings of big lyrical landscapes and pictures with the singing of the nature of his native country. His major talent was landscape painting. He loved to travel around his country – Azerbaijan – exploring its beauty, which was the source of his inspiration. Many of his works depict specific areas of Azerbaijan.

Sattar Bahlulzade won many prizes. He received the title of Honoured Art Worker of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1960 and was named People's Artist in 1963. His works have been exhibited all over the world, including personal exhibitions in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Turkey and Russia. He also created around 30 sketch diaries that contain his reflections on life and art (CLT).

6. The Thailand National Commission for UNESCO has requested that the Organization be associated with the **200th anniversary of His Royal Highness Krom Luang Wongsa Dhiraj Snid, scholar and poet (1808-1871)**, in 2008. The Director-General considers that this request complies with the procedure and criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, described below.

His Royal Highness Krom Luang Wongsajit (1808–1871) was a remarkable personality, who promoted the culture of peace through dialogue among civilizations, reflecting UNESCO's objectives to promote closer relations among peoples through tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity. His commitment to "negotiation and dialogue among civilizations" made him prominent in the international community, particularly in Asia, Europe and the United States of America. He initiated and introduced policies emphasizing peace and harmony with European countries by signing several treaties. At the same time, he was a prolific writer who published various works in the fields of literature, history, politics and particularly in traditional herbal medicine. In recognition of his merits as an intellectual, poet, peace activist, scientist and diplomat, many academic organizations and foundations honoured him by inviting him to be an active member. (SHS)

7. The Permanent Delegation of Benin to UNESCO has requested that the Organization be associated with the celebration in 2008 of the **100th anniversary of the death of King Toffa I, ruler of the kingdom of Hogbonu or Ajase**. The Director-General considers that this request complies with the procedure and criteria adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session and proposes that UNESCO be associated with the celebration of this anniversary, described below.

Toffa I was a ruler of the kingdom of Hogbonu, or Ajase, which in modern-day Benin is known as Porto Novo. His reign (1874-1908) coincided with the colonization of the African continent, but King Toffa favoured a policy of openness and cooperation with the West. An enthusiastic advocate of tolerance and cultural diversity, King Toffa called on his subjects to attend French schools in order to master there the "miraculous arms" of Western technological prowess. That policy consisted in assimilating European values selectively and in acquiring technical knowledge while jealously safeguarding the national cultural identity in order to promote economic growth while preserving peaceful coexistence.

The reign of King Toffa I also coincided with the cultural apogee of the "Agoudas", descendants of Africans from Brazil and the Caribbean who, after the abolition of slavery, had been encouraged by King Toffa I to settle in his Kingdom. The new trades that they brought to the country and the skills that they had acquired abroad marked and continue to mark the architecture and many aspects of the intangible cultural heritage of Porto Novo and Benin. Lastly, continuing a genuinely African tradition, King Toffa I promoted and strengthened a policy of peaceful coexistence and triangular dialogue between endogenous religions (voodoo or Orisha) and the two new faiths of foreign origin (Islam and Christianity) (AFR).

DRAFT DECISION

8. At the close of its deliberations, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 177 EX/58 Add.,
2. Recommends to the General Conference:
 - (a) that UNESCO also be associated in 2008-2009 with the following celebrations:
 1. 100th anniversary of the birth of Sattar Bahlulzade, artist (1909-1974), replacing the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mikayil Mushfig, poet (1908-1939) (Azerbaijan);

2. 200th anniversary of His Royal Highness Krom Luang Wongsa Dhiraj Snid, scholar and poet (1808-1871) (Thailand);
 3. 100th anniversary of the death of King Toffa I (1874-1908) (Benin);
- (b) that the list of anniversaries with whose celebration UNESCO will be associated in 2008-2009, as set out in document 177 EX/58 and hereby completed, together with that already contained in 176 EX/Decision 47, be definitively closed, in accordance with the procedure adopted by the Executive Board at its 159th session (159 EX/Decision 7.5);
- (c) that any contribution by the Organization to these celebrations will be provided under the Participation Programme, in accordance with the rules governing the latter.