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Committee: United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Agenda Item: Addressing Illicit Trafficking and Protection
of Cultural Property

Country: People's Republic of China



In recent years, theft, looting, and illicit trafficking of cultural property are rising issues worldwide. These issues deprive people of history and culture and weaken social cohesion in the long term. Furthermore, the rate of fuel organized crimes and contribution to the financing of terrorism are increasing. Museums, public and private collections, legitimate owners and holders, religious buildings, cultural institutions, and archeological sites worldwide get affected by this issue. Beyond the affected institutions the whole society suffers as these objects are an integral part of our history, culture and identity.

Since 2023, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has trained more than 1,200 museums and customs professionals from 80 countries to strengthen legal frameworks and has made initiatives to raise public awareness. In September 2025, UNESCO launched the world's first Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects using 3D modelling to display original replicas of stolen items. The UN culture agency continues to support countries in efforts to identify and recover stolen objects. UNESCO has contributed to raising public awareness of the stakes of illicit trafficking. It has also helped the signatory countries to draw up laws and preventive measures and encouraged the restitution of illegally displaced property. However, while legislation has become stricter, public awareness has increased, and systems for monitoring, tracing, and authenticating works have improved.

As the delegation of China, to resolve this problem and ensure our cultural properties are safe, we think member states should strengthen their laws and enforcement such as tougher penalties for smugglers and dealers and better custom control. Furthermore, international cooperation is essential to resolve this issue everywhere around the world. Moreover, the UN should provide regulation of the art market, increase transparency in private collections, and require provenance checks before artifacts are sold. Also, protection of archaeological sites must be provided by the help of UN and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) through local guards and advanced technology. Campaigns must be organized by NGOs and the UN so that public awareness can be raised on these issues. Resolving these problems is essential because we would be able to protect our history and culture better and we must preserve cultural heritage for future generations.