



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Hundred and ninety-first session

# 191 EX/11

## Part I

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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

## **PRESERVATION AND ACCESS TO DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

### **PART I**

#### **DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME**

##### **SUMMARY**

Pursuant to 190 EX/Decision 16 and in light of the debate held by the Board during its 190th session, the Director-General hereby submits for consideration by the Executive Board a draft Action Plan for strengthening the Memory of the World Programme.

The document lists the activities planned for strengthening the Programme, along with their time-frame and financial implications. These are primarily based on 36 C/Resolution 59 and the recommendations formulated during the experts meeting in Warsaw in May 2012.

Financial and administrative implications are dealt with in paragraphs 4, 9 and 10.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 11.

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its 190th session, the Executive Board requested that the Director-General prepare a Draft Action Plan which includes a time-frame and financial implications for strengthening the Memory of the World Programme (MoW). It further requested that the Plan be based on 36 C/Resolution 59 and the recommendations formulated during the experts meeting that took place in May 2012 in Warsaw, and that it should be presented for consideration at the 191st session of the Executive Board.
2. The present Action Plan was prepared by the UNESCO Secretariat. In addition to 36 C/Resolution 59 and the recommendations formulated during the Warsaw experts meeting, it also includes other key recommendations emanating from the UNESCO/UBC Vancouver Declaration (2012), the 4th international Memory of the World Conference (2011) and recent surveys conducted by UNESCO's Secretariat (2012) and the Latvian National Commission (2011) conducted to determine the impact, strengths and weaknesses of the Programme at its different levels.
3. The Plan is structured around the main strategic areas which were described in 190 EX/16. It outlines for each objective, the activities planned, timetable for their implementation, resources required, and expected results. The different activities will be implemented in close cooperation with MoW national and regional committees, partner NGOs, UNESCO Member States, the United Nations system organizations, regional cooperative platforms and other organizations as well as the private sector.
4. Noting that the financial situation of UNESCO is not conducive to greater internal resource allocation, consideration should be given to the establishment of an extrabudgetary fund to receive contributions to finance implementation of the projects and activities foreseen, whether these are national, regional or international in scope.

## ACTION PLAN

5. **Objective 1**      **Raise awareness of the importance of preserving the world's documentary heritage, including national documentary heritage, and contribute to its preservation**

*Implementation: UNESCO Headquarters, Field Offices, international, regional and national MoW committees, National Commissions*

*Time Frame: 2013-2021      Budget: US \$500,000*

Activities:

- (a) publicize the MoW Programme and the different benefits it offers through the dissemination of information to UNESCO Field Offices and National Commissions, MoW committees and partner organizations including through social media, the UNESCO website, special events and International Days, initiatives, projects, communities of practice, etc.;
- (b) develop and produce an operational manual containing practical guidelines and models on setting up national/regional committees and registers, the use of logo, promotional strategies for fundraising and organizing media events (2013-2014);
- (c) develop and publish a simple and transparent monitoring and reporting system for the MoW registers to assess impact of inscription and status of preservation of listed items;

- (d) feature books and articles on MoW and items on its register in professional literature, conferences and special publications;
- (e) actively encourage and assist non- or under-represented areas/countries to prepare and propose nominations for inscription on the international register as means of increasing its geographic and cultural scope;
- (f) inform policy-makers and the public at large of the role of documentary heritage in national development through case studies and best practices;
- (g) subject to the decision concerning document 191 EX/11 Part II, develop a draft normative instrument for presentation to the General Conference for adoption (2014-2017).

*Expected results:*

Increased visibility, raised profile and prestige of the MoW Programme. More active participation of stewardship institutions in the achievement of the Programme's goals. Effective policy and implementation strategies established in Member States for upgraded and enhanced national legislative policy. Enhanced documentary heritage status and better resourced stewardship institutions contributing to the preservation and accessibility of important national documentary heritage including protection of non-listed items. National MoW Registers and committees established in at least 20 countries. Best practice examples available for adoption by stewardship institutions. Draft normative instrument developed (subject to the decision of the Executive Board on the launch of the standard-setting process).

**6. Objective 2      **Develop education and training programmes for digitization and preservation practices****

*Implementation: UNESCO Headquarters, Field Offices, NGOs, private sector, academic institutions, professional bodies*

*Time Frame: 2013-2021      Budget: US \$2,500,000*

Activities:

- (a) establish a MoW Subcommittee on Education and Research to steer and coordinate the development of curricula and the implementation of training activities including the possibilities of introducing MoW Studies in higher learning institutions (*June 2013*);
- (b) collaborate with international professional associations and other bodies to develop academic curricula for digital preservation as well as appropriate level modules for incorporation into history or humanities curricula for institutions of higher learning and secondary schools;
- (c) organize regional and national hands-on training workshops on the preparation of nominations, and on technical aspects of preservation;
- (d) discuss and explore the creation of a special section on the World Digital Library (WDL) for institutions of higher learning and for secondary schools, with a user-friendly interface that facilitates access to the rich historic information available (*2014-2016*);
- (e) design and develop collection-based, content delivery mobile phone applications to reach youth and increase learning possibilities;
- (f) develop a core curriculum on the preservation of digital records and identify delivery strategies (e.g. from workshops to comprehensive education and training programmes) directed to a variety of audiences (*2014-2017*);

- (g) give consideration to establishing a “MoW Knowledge Centre” possibly within the UNESCO Library, to collect all relevant material on MoW as the basis for worldwide research and as a repository of best-practice examples.

*Expected results:*

Training programmes and global educational approaches developed to enhance the management and preservation capacities of archives, library, and museum personnel. WDL partnership enhanced with educational platform established.

**7. Objective 3: Promote networking for more effective implementation of MoW Programme**

*Implementation: UNESCO Headquarters, Field Offices, international, regional and national committees, United Nations Agencies, regional organizations, Member States, professional bodies*

*Timeframe: 2013-2021      Budget: US \$200,000*

*Activities:*

- (a) encourage exchanges of experience between UNESCO Member States based on best practice models obtained from different national and regional committees with respect to implementation of the MoW Programme;
- (b) expand existing cooperation between MoW and the WDL and explore extending cooperation to other digital resources such as Europeana and Réseau Francophone Numérique;
- (c) promote MoW in regional strategies and cooperative platforms (European Union, African Union, Arab League, OAS, Mercosur, ASEAN, etc.) with a view to obtaining increased funding for the Programme;
- (d) pursue synergies with UNESCO world heritage and intangible heritage programmes focusing on the value and authentication provided by documentary heritage as well as on the commonalities among the three programmes;
- (e) develop mechanisms for national/regional committees as well as for stewardship institutions to communicate and share ideas among each other through the establishment of networks and communities of practice.

*Expected Results:*

Awareness of the role and influence of all MoW registers. Improved functioning of MoW at national level for greater protection of documentary heritage through the establishment of a national Memory of the World committee and a National MoW Register in every country as a strategic goal. Levels of government and private sector sponsorship increased in support of heritage preservation and access projects. Enhanced regional and inter-regional cooperation concerning similar challenges and experiences

**8. Objective 4 Develop a cohesive, conceptual and practical digital strategy for the management and preservation of recorded information**

*Implementation: UNESCO Headquarters, Field Offices, international, regional and national committees, private sector, Member States, professional bodies*

*Timeframe: 2013-2021      Budget: US \$600,000*

Activities:

- (a) establish a roadmap proposing solutions, agreements and policies that ensure long-term access and trustworthy preservation (2013-2014);
- (b) update the implementation guidelines of the 2003 UNESCO Charter on preservation of digital heritage (2013-2014);
- (c) cooperate with international professional associations, academia and the private sector to design and publish guidelines, policies and procedures as well as best-practice models in digitization and digital preservation;
- (d) provide assistance and advice in the digitization of precious or invaluable analogue documents to enable their retrieval in the digital era;
- (e) develop assessment criteria for repositories to improve or implement trustworthy digital preservation;
- (f) establish an emergency digitization programme to rescue documentary materials endangered by natural disasters or armed conflicts, as well as a programme for the recovery of analogue and digital heritage that is affected by obsolete hardware and software.

*Expected results:*

Strategic road map addressing issues related to open government, open data, open access and electronic government. Digital preservation made a development priority with appropriate investments in infrastructure ensuring trustworthiness, long-term accessibility and usability of preserved digital records. Effective cooperation established with international standards bodies to reduce inconsistency among different reference sources on digital preservation. Basic digitization guidelines providing guidance to Member States for digitization of national heritage, or to preserve items threatened by natural or man-made catastrophes.

## **STRENGTHENED SECRETARIAT OF THE PROGRAMME**

9. The current secretariat is critically under-powered to implement the existing MoW Programme and therefore has to be strengthened to cope with the additional but indispensable tasks foreseen in the proposed Action Plan. Currently MoW is implemented by one full-time and one part-time professional as well as one general service staff member; none of whom works solely on the Programme.

10. To meet the challenges, the secretariat should ideally comprise four full-time professional staff with appropriate clerical assistance. Given UNESCO's resources, additional staff will need to be obtained through redeployment, funding of Associate Experts by Member States and/or the secondment of national professionals for short-term assignments. Among its specific activities, the secretariat will be required to implement the strategic priorities listed in the Memory of the World Action Plan as well as the permanent Programme activities at different levels including its representational, administrative, strategic planning and reporting functions; providing support to different MoW committees and advising on protecting documentary heritage at the global level, in cooperation with professional associations, NGOs, (especially ICA, ICOM, IFLA and CCAA) and key stakeholders for the implementation of policies and projects concerning documentary heritage protection.

## PROPOSED DECISION

11. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 36 C/Resolution 59 and 190 EX/Decision 16 concerning the strengthening of the Memory of the World Programme,
2. Having examined document 191 EX/11 Part I,
3. Takes note of the varied activities that permit the Memory of the World to maintain UNESCO at the forefront of the protection of and access to recorded knowledge;
4. Urges UNESCO Member States as well as public and private institutions to take all possible measures to enhance the protection of documentary heritage, including in digital formats,
5. Approves the Action Plan for strengthening the Memory of the World Programme, by means of extrabudgetary funds as indicated in document 191 EX11 Part I,
6. Invites the Director-General to seek the necessary extrabudgetary resources to ensure the implementation of the Plan and invites Member States and other funding sources to consider making voluntary contributions in support of the Plan,
7. Requests the Director-General to initiate implementation of the Plan in cooperation with all stakeholders subject to the availability of the requisite extrabudgetary funds and report periodically on progress.



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# Executive Board

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## Part II

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## PRESERVATION AND ACCESS TO DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

### PART II

#### PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF A STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENT

##### SUMMARY

At its 190th session, the Executive Board requested that the Director-General undertake a preliminary study of the technical, financial and legal aspects relating to the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage and present the findings for examination at its 191st session.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure concerning Recommendations to Member States and international Conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution, the Director-General submits the results of the study to the Executive Board.

While it would be the Director-General's intention to absorb any costs that may be incurred as a result of action requested by the Executive Board concerning the study, from the regular programme, given the tight financial situation, the probability is that efforts will have to be deployed to mobilize extrabudgetary resources.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 15.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. As the consequences of wars, natural disasters and technological progress constantly modify the documentary heritage landscape, appropriate protection measures are indispensable to address the many resultant challenges that contribute to dramatic losses of knowledge and identity. It was in an attempt to stem such losses that UNESCO instituted the Memory of the World Programme (MoW) in 1992. In its 20 years of existence, MoW has become the brand for the preservation of documentary heritage, encouraging international cooperation, knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising of the value of documentary heritage in the form of records in print, audiovisual and/or digital formats that are primarily found in archives, libraries, museums and similar institutions.

2. Experts associated with MoW have been increasingly concerned about the fragility of this heritage, expressing the need for its protection through effective policies that contribute to upgrading and enhancing national legislative and implementation strategies in Member States. Protection is even more necessary as cultural exchange and collaboration are now world-wide, transcending national borders and creating an entirely new dimension of access. A normative instrument was assessed as the best mechanism to achieve this desired objective.

3. The 10th meeting of the MoW International Advisory Committee (2011) consequently recommended the establishment of a Working Group to explore alternative legal means to reinforce the Programme. The findings were presented to the Experts' Meeting (Poland, 2012) which urged UNESCO to develop a normative instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage. The international conference on "The Memory of the World in the Digital Age: Digitization and Preservation" (Canada, 2012) also recommended that UNESCO consider the inclusion of protection of digital heritage in a normative instrument on documentary heritage.

## **DESIRABILITY OR NECESSITY OF A STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENT**

### **Legal aspects**

4. There is a commonly-held view of many Member States and documentary heritage experts that a UNESCO standard-setting instrument would assist the further development of MoW and, in particular, remove obstacles to the selection, preservation and migration of records at the national level.

5. A key method of reinforcing preservation and defence is to raise general awareness of governments, international organizations, public and private foundations, as well as the public at large, of the need for continuing and sustained support for heritage protection. The MoW International Register was established as a key mechanism to enhance awareness through publicizing the breadth, age and significance of this heritage by listing diverse examples. Some UNESCO programmes, including the World Heritage system and the Intangible Cultural Heritage use Convention-based listing systems to publicize cultural heritage and bolster its protection. Equally, there are other effective UNESCO listing systems such as "Man and Biosphere" which operate without a Convention.

6. While documentary heritage is theoretically protected in international law through the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the ravages of unrest or war in Sarajevo, Baghdad, Cairo and Timbuktu has resulted in serious losses of heritage collections. This seems to call for a major enhancement of protection of documentary heritage.

7. UNESCO implements several Conventions and Recommendations which apply, to some extent, to the items covered by the Memory of the World Programme. They contain important provisions on international collaboration and protective measures which should be enforced by



Member States. However, many of the specific issues related to archives, libraries, digital records and other documents are not covered in detail in these existing instruments. Because of the very diverse levels and techniques of preservation and access in Member States, a standard-setting instrument could be an essential aid to harmonization of practice in this particular field and thus encourage access and exchange in accordance with UNESCO's work to foster cultural diversity. Such an instrument would operate as an educational tool heightening public awareness of this heritage and would meet the interests of many Member States by setting out standards for those responsible for preservation and access.

8. Avoidance of duplication at all levels is essential especially given the current financial circumstances. Further coherence of actions can be assured by building synergies between MoW and other heritage programmes. The safeguarding, or even revival, of intangible heritage, such as folk songs, is often dependent on the preservation of physical carriers, such as video and sound recordings, while the objectives and principles of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions are clearly forwarded by the publicity given to MoW items concerning minorities and lesser-known cultures.

9. The detailed experience accumulated by MoW in the last two decades is worthy of an in-depth reference document encapsulating guidelines for professionals in this area. Significant principles concerning documentary, including digital, heritage protection have been developed and this record of knowledge and practice has created a sound basis which can now be distilled in an instrument setting a standard of best practice in this area of UNESCO's mandate, bringing with it the full authority of UNESCO and engaging the responsibility of Member States.

### **Form of the instrument**

10. The study examined which form of standard-setting instrument would achieve the maximum possible protection of vulnerable and endangered documentary heritage. The binding nature of Conventions is often regarded as particularly prestigious, and a Convention could endow MoW with better status, more support from Member States, more financial resources and more staff as well as give UNESCO National Commissions stronger grounds to persuade governments to support the Programme. However, the study found that a well-designed Recommendation would equally increase visibility and heighten awareness of MoW within Member States because of the obligation to bring the Recommendation to the attention of the relevant authorities and to report on the status of its implementation. Non-mandatory instruments (standard-setting Recommendations, Declarations, Charters, etc.), often described as "soft law", have an important role in harmonizing State practice. In view of the needs at the national level, a Recommendation addressed to States seems most appropriate.

11. The three levels of concern for preserving documentary heritage are the physical carriers (manuscripts, stela, incunabula, books) whose information goes beyond text and reveals techniques, crafts and their own history; the actual information content which needs protection against loss; digital records of all kinds, whether digitized or "born digital" which are particularly vulnerable. A Recommendation has the flexibility to be rapidly adjusted to meet the constant technological evolution of modern documentary heritage carriers and assist States to achieve best practice in the preservation of, and access to, precious items of national heritage.

### **Financial aspects**

12. Developing and administering a new standard-setting instrument of any kind will require additional funding. Negotiation costs are estimated to be in the range of US \$150,000 for UNESCO, excluding additional costs for Member States' representations. The costs of ongoing administration and monitoring also need to be considered, as well as those related to the organization of statutory meetings of State Parties and Intergovernmental Committees. While there is no distinction between Recommendations and Conventions in terms of the procedure to be followed for the preparations of drafts, their consideration and adoption by the General

Conference, Recommendations do not entail statutory meetings, thus giving UNESCO more flexibility in deciding when meetings should be held and in securing extrabudgetary funds if required.

13. While it would be the intention of the Director-General to meet the costs associated with this exercise from the regular programme, the tight financial situation might necessitate the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources.

### **Other considerations**

14. The staff resources for the preparation of the many meetings now required by the existing UNESCO Conventions (Secretariat report, translation and interpretation) is another critical factor. Recent practice within UNESCO of requiring a Meeting of States Parties (usually once every two years) and an Intergovernmental Committee meeting once or twice per biennium for a Convention has substantially increased the administrative burden on existing staff. Since the inception of the Memory of the World Programme, staff support has fluctuated between one and two persons who also have had other duties. The amount of productive work done with so little staff is commendable. However, unless further staff resources are supplied it is difficult to see how the additional burden of servicing new bodies can be added to their current duties. The number of monitoring reports and intergovernmental committees is also a considerable burden on least developed countries and small island developing States, making it less likely that they can send relevant experts to each meeting. It seems wise to try to limit the unnecessary use of this complex process and to use less demanding procedures where this is possible.

### **Proposed Decision**

15. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 191 EX/11 Part II, presenting a preliminary study on the technical, financial and legal aspects on the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage,
2. Decides to include this item on the provisional agenda of the 37th session of the General Conference;
3. Invites the Director-General to submit to the General Conference, at its 37th session, the above-mentioned preliminary study, together with the relevant observations and decisions of the Executive Board thereon;
4. Recommends that the General Conference decide, at its 37th session, that the question of preservation and access to documentary, including digital, heritage be regulated at the international level by means of a Recommendation.

## **ANNEX**

### **Selected legal instruments with relevance for the Memory of the World Programme**

Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003

Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, 2003

Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage, 2003

Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001

Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Folklore and Traditional Culture, 1989

Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images, 1980

Recommendation for the Protection of Movable Cultural Property, 1978

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972

Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972

Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970

Recommendation on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Export, Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1964

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954