Item 29 of the provisional agenda

MEMORY OF THE WORLD PROGRAMME:
EXPLORING MEANS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

SUMMARY

This item was included in the provisional agenda of the 199th session of the Executive Board at the request of Germany.

An explanatory note together with a draft decision is included in the document.

Action expected of the Executive Board: Proposed decision in paragraph 5.
EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. The collective memory of the peoples of the world is of vital importance in preserving cultural identities, in bridging the past and the present and in shaping the future. Documentary heritage in archives, libraries and museums constitutes a major part of that memory and reflects the diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. However, this documentary heritage is fragile due to, among others, natural disasters, conflicts/wars and rapid technological changes.

2. Impelled by its constitutional mandate to build a culture of peace by advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples and by fostering a wider diffusion of culture, UNESCO recognized that urgent action was required to prevent the irrevocable loss of collective memory and thus launched in 1992 the “Memory of the World” (MoW) Programme, with the objectives of facilitating preservation of documentary heritage, enabling universal access to it and raising public awareness of its significance and the need to preserve it.

3. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the MoW Programme was established by the Executive Board at its 149th session in 1996 (149 EX/Decision 5.3), as a standing committee (Category V). IAC is charged with guiding the planning and implementation of the Programme as a whole, including evaluating requests and making recommendations on the inscription of items on the Memory of the World Register, based on the assessment undertaken by the Register Subcommittee and its panels of experts covering various disciplines. IAC meetings have since been held every two years.

4. The MoW International Advisory Committee agreed, at its twelfth meeting, held in Abu Dhabi in October 2015, to undertake work to review its working methods and consider a possible revision of its procedures and General Guidelines of the Memory of the World Programme.

PROPOSED DECISION

5. Based on the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board:

1. Having examined document 199 EX/29,

2. Appreciates that the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme, since its establishment in 1992, has made important contributions to the preservation of documentary heritage;

3. Welcomes the review under way by the International Advisory Committee, taking note of document 199 EX/29.INF;

4. Requests the Director-General to distribute the final Report of the International Advisory Committee to Member States;

5. Invites the Director-General to keep the Executive Board appropriately informed of the review undertaken by the International Advisory Committee.