

**Intergovernmental Special Committee meeting of experts (Category II)  
related to a Draft Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and  
Access to, Documentary Heritage in the Digital Era**

1-2 July 2015  
UNESCO House, Paris (Fontenoy Building, Room IV)

**Circular Letter 4075 dated 4 September 2014**

**Circular Letter 4075 including:**

- **The preliminary study of the technical, financial and legal aspects on the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage (37 C/48), and**
- **The first draft of the proposed Recommendation.**



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

04/09/2014

Ref.: CL/4075

Subject: **Draft Recommendation concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage in the Digital Age**

Sir/Madam,

Further to 37 C/Resolution 53, by which the General Conference decided that the question of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage, including digital heritage, be regulated at the international level by means of a standard-setting instrument, and invited the Director-General to submit to it, at its 38th session, a draft recommendation to that end, please find enclosed:

- a preliminary report setting forth the position with regard to the issues to be regulated and to the scope of the proposed regulating action, and
- a first draft of the proposed Recommendation.

In conformity 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, Member States shall forward to UNESCO their comments and observations on the preliminary report and on the proposed draft Recommendation at least 10 months before the opening of the 38th session of the General Conference, i.e. by **5 January 2015**.

Kindly note that all comments and observations should be sent to the Secretariat of the Memory of the World Programme, in the Knowledge Societies Division of the Communication and Information Sector. The contact details are as follows:

Secretariat of the Memory of the World Programme  
UNESCO  
(attn: Ms Iskra Panevska)  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75007 Paris  
France

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Irina Bokova  
Director-General

Enclosures: 2

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO  
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO



**General Conference**  
37th session, Paris 2013

37 C

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

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des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

37 C/48  
20 August 2013  
Original: English

Item 8.2 of the provisional agenda

**PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS  
ON THE DESIRABILITY OF A STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENT ON  
PRESERVATION AND ACCESS TO DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

**OUTLINE**

**Source:** 36 C/Resolution 59, 191 EX/Decision 11(II)

**Background:** 36 C/Resolution 59 requested the Director-General to initiate an in-depth reflection on evaluating and strengthening the Memory of the World Programme (MoW). The Director-General consequently convened a meeting of experts in May 2012 whose recommendations were submitted to, and adopted by, the Executive Board at its 190th session. After examining the experts' proposals, the Board further requested the Director-General to undertake a preliminary study of the technical, financial and legal aspects on the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage for examination by the 191st session. At its 191st session, the Executive Board recommended that the 37th session of the General Conference decide that the issue of preservation and access to documentary heritage in all its forms be regulated at the international level by means of a Recommendation.

**Purpose:** This document presents the above-mentioned feasibility study, including the relevant decision of the Executive Board, concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage.

**Decision required:** paragraph 5.

1. The issue of preserving the world's recorded knowledge has been a source of concern to specialists and others familiar with its fragility and the ensuing risks of losing important sources of information. Many groups have urged UNESCO to develop a standard-setting instrument to

provide the basis for the protection of documentary heritage, including in digital form. Protection can be effectively achieved through strategic policies that contribute to enhanced national legislative and implementation frameworks in Member States.

2. At its 190th session, the Executive Board (190 EX/Decision 16) requested the Director-General to undertake and present to it the results of a preliminary study of the various elements to be taken into consideration in developing an instrument to lay the legal basis for the protection of documentary heritage especially in light of the new access dimension that has been created. The diversity of preservation and access issues that have arisen would be best served by a standard-setting instrument that aids harmonization of practice.

3. The study, carried out by the Secretariat (see Annex I), took into consideration the findings of experts as well as consultations with members of Memory of the World committees and heritage professionals. It also examined existing instruments in the area of heritage protection in order to determine whether these afforded sufficient protection for documents. It concluded that there was a gap in current instruments which meant that the specific issues that are peculiar to archives, libraries, and digital records in particular, were not fully covered. This was especially true with respect to the continuous technological evolution of modern documentary heritage media and the resulting legal, cultural and social impact on access and preservation of documentary heritage.

4. By its 191 EX/Decision 11 (II) the Executive Board invited the Director-General to submit the preliminary study contained in document 191 EX/11 Part II to the General Conference, at its 37th session, together with the relevant observations and decisions of the Executive Board thereon and recommended that the General Conference decide, at its 37th session, that the question of preservation and access to documentary heritage, including digital heritage, be regulated at the international level by means of a recommendation, subject to the availability of resources.

5. In the light of the foregoing, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following draft resolution.

The General Conference,

1. Having examined document 37 C/48,
2. Recalling 191 EX/Decision 11 (II),
3. Takes note of the findings of the preliminary study of the technical, financial and legal aspects on the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage;
4. Invites the Director-General to submit to it at its 38th session a draft recommendation on preservation and access to document heritage;
5. Appeals to Member States and potential donors for extrabudgetary funding to enable greater in-depth consultations on the elaboration of the proposed Recommendation.

## **ANNEX I**

### **PRELIMINARY STUDY**

#### **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 tenth 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, stelaes, 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.

## ANNEX II

### **191 EX/Decision 11 (II) Preliminary study of the technical, financial and legal aspects on the desirability of a standard-setting instrument on preservation and access to documentary heritage**

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 inscribe this item on the provisional agenda of the 37th session of the General Conference;
3. Invites the Director-General to submit the preliminary study contained in document 191 EX/11 Part II to the General Conference, at its 37th session, 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 heritage, including digital heritage, be regulated at the international level by means of a recommendation, subject to the availability of resources.



## DRAFT

# SAFEGUARDING THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD – UNESCO RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF, AND ACCESS TO, DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

## PREAMBLE

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris from ..... 2015, at its 38th session,

**Considering** that the heritage documented over time, in all its analogue and digital forms, through time and space, and has become a primary means of knowledge creation and expression and part of humanity's heritage impacting all areas of life,

**Considering** that documentary heritage records the unfolding of human thought and events, the evolution of languages, cultures, peoples and their understanding of the world, and is thereby an indispensable part of knowledge societies,

**Noting** that the evolution of documentary heritage enables intercultural education and personal enrichment, underpins social and economic systems, and is a crucial resource for development,

**Considering at the same time** that the preservation and long term accessibility of documentary heritage underpins fundamental freedoms of opinion, expression and information as essential human rights,

**Also considering** that universal access to documentary heritage strengthens peaceful coexistence and international understanding, while respecting fully the legitimate interests of copyright and related rights-holders,

**Recognizing** that aspects of the history and culture of which exist in the form of documentary heritage may not be conveniently accessible,

**Recognizing also** that **over time** considerable parts of documentary heritage have disappeared due to neglect, deterioration, lack of resources, accidental or unwarranted disposal, natural and man-made disasters, social upheaval and armed conflict, or are becoming inaccessible through rapid technological change and the lack of up to date legislation, resulting in irreversible loss and impoverishment of that heritage,

**Recalling** that, in response to this challenge, UNESCO established the Memory of the World Programme in 1992 to increase awareness and protection of the world's documentary heritage, and to provide its universal and permanent accessibility,

**Taking into account** the rapid evolution of technology, and the challenge of establishing models and processes for preserving complex digital heritage objects, such as multi-media works, interactive hypermedia, online dialogues and dynamic data objects from complex systems, mobile content and future emerging formats,

**Referring to** the rights and responsibilities of States to take appropriate measures for the protection, preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage,

**Taking into account** the Universal Declaration on Archives accepted by the International Council on Archives (ICA) and endorsed by the **36th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, as well as the IFLA** (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom,

**Noting also that** the General Conference of UNESCO has already adopted several international instruments relating to the protection of some elements of documentary heritage, in particular:

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and Protocols (1954, 1999)

Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2013)

Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images (1980)

Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage (2003)

Having decided at its 37th session, that this question should be the subject of a Recommendation to Member States,

Adopts, the ..... day of ..... 2015, the present Recommendation:

For the purposes of this Recommendation, a **document** is an object comprising analogue or digital informational *content* and the *carrier* on which it resides. It is preservable and usually moveable. The content may comprise signs or codes (such as text), images (still or moving) and sounds, which are able to be copied or migrated. The carrier may have important aesthetic, cultural or technical qualities. The relationship between content and carrier may range from incidental to integral.

**Documentary heritage** comprises those single documents, or groups of documents, of significant and enduring value to a community, a culture, a country or to humanity generally, and whose deterioration or loss would be a harmful impoverishment. Significance of this heritage may become clear only with the passage of time. All documentary heritage of national and historical significance should be considered by Member States as part of the global documentary heritage, which should be handed down in its entirety to future generations.

The world's documentary heritage belongs to all, should be fully preserved and protected for all, and, with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities, and should be permanently accessible to all without hindrance. It provides the means for understanding social, political, community as well as personal history. It can help to underpin good governance and sustainable development. For each country, its documentary heritage defines its national memory and identity, and contributes its place in the global community.

## **1. IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

1.1 Member States are invited to establish principles for determining, through research and consultation, which documents constitute their documentary heritage. These documents should be

managed in a way that ensures their preservation and accessibility over time, and assigns means of discovery, including cataloguing and metadata.

1.2 Member States are encouraged to identify specific documentary heritage whose survival is at imminent risk, and draw it to the attention of competent bodies able to take appropriate preservation measures. They should support and strengthen their relevant institutions and, where practical and appropriate, encourage private owners to care for their own documentary heritage in the public interest. Similarly, public and private institutions should ensure care for the documents which they themselves create.

1.3 Policies, mechanisms and criteria for selecting, acquiring and deselecting documentary heritage should be developed by relevant institutions in coordination with civil society, taking account not only of key documents but also of their contextual material, including social media. Documents of enduring value should be distinguished from those intended for temporary retention. Because of their inherently temporary nature, decisions concerning digital documents may need to be made at or before the time of creation.

1.4 Member States should encourage the identification and nomination of significant documentary heritage to the relevant national, regional or international Memory of the World Register as a means of raising awareness and promoting preservation and access.

## **2. PRESERVATION OF DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

2.1 Preservation is not a once and for all time action. It is an ongoing process requiring the ongoing management of both analogue and digital objects. . In the case of digital documents, action and intervention are desirable from before the point of creation and acquisition, in order to optimize further management, minimize costs and to properly manage the risks involved.

2.2 In pursuing measures of preservation, integrity, authenticity and reliability should be the guiding principle. Concrete measures and actions should follow the recommendations, guidelines, best practices and standards developed or supported by the professional archives organisations. The Memory of the World Programme provides an appropriate framework for monitoring these guidelines and their further development in accordance with technological advancement and archival needs.

2.3 Member States are encouraged to develop awareness raising measures and policies as a key component of preservation, including promoting research as well as training for documentary heritage professionals. These should embrace curatorial best practices, current and emerging technologies, forensic skills and core competencies in relevant science, technology and engineering, thereby raising awareness of the urgency of timely preservation action in a constantly changing environment.

2.4 The existence of possibly legitimate access restrictions on any part of the documentary heritage should not inhibit or limit the ability of relevant institutions to take such preservation action as they professionally judge to be necessary.

2.5 Member States should encourage consistency of best practice preservation standards and practices across relevant institutions, including risk management, and investment in trustworthy technical infrastructure. This may include nationwide coordination and sharing of tasks among nominated institutions, based on their existing roles, strengths and responsibilities.

2.6 Member States are invited to encourage relevant institutions to link with the appropriate professional associations and the Memory of the World Programme to both enhance and share their

technical knowledge, and contribute to the ongoing development of research, guidelines and standards.

### **3. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

3.1 Member States are encouraged to provide appropriate legal frameworks for relevant institutions and ensure their necessary independence in preserving and providing access to documentary heritage, so as to sustain public trust in the scope of material selected, and the way it is preserved. The provision of access is visible evidence and justification of public expenditure on preservation.

3.2 Member States are urged to promote and facilitate maximum access to, and use of, documentary heritage by empowering relevant institutions to provide accurate and constantly updated catalogues and finding aids, equitable person-to-person access services, Internet and web-based publications and portals, and digitized content, using international best practice standards.

3.3 The avenues for pro-active access are multiplying through the growth of the digital media and the development of global networks among relevant institutions and their partners. Member States should incite and support them to develop outreach programmes, including exhibitions, travelling presentations, radio and television programmes, publications, consumer products, online streaming, social media, lectures, educational programmes, special events and the digitisation of content for downloading.

3.4 Access programmes may be facilitated by public-private partnerships and commercial sponsorship of relevant institutions. Member States are invited to encourage such arrangements if they are responsible and equitable.

3.5 Where restrictions to accessing documentary heritage are necessary to protect privacy, human safety, security, confidentiality or for other legitimate reasons, they should be clearly defined and stated and be of limited duration. Where necessary, they should be underpinned by appropriate law or regulation.

3.6 The legitimate entitlements of rights-holders should be recognized and observed for their duration. When updating or enacting new legislation which impacts on access to the documentary heritage, Member States should seek to strike a fair balance between such observance and the fundamental right of freedom of information, and open access to information in the public domain and to the public memory, as embodied in the documentary heritage.

3.7 Member States are invited to enhance the visibility and accessibility of their documentary heritage through the outreach activities and publications of the Memory of the World Programme, with investment in digitisation of content for access purposes now being one of its key components.

### **4. POLICY MEASURES**

4.1 Member States are urged to view their documentary heritage as an asset to be protected, nurtured and drawn upon, not as an expense to be endured, and to apply this perspective in national legislation. They are further encouraged to recognize the long term need for new investment in digital infrastructure and skills, and to endow relevant institutions adequately to manage the increasing scope of their responsibilities.

4.2 At the same time, in the context of their national heritage policies, Member States are encouraged to take a broad and holistic view of the needs of relevant institutions, beyond the

practicalities of infrastructure, and encourage logical partnerships and cost sharing with universities and other entities in setting up shared facilities, processes and services.

4.3. Member States should encourage the development of new forms and tools of education and research on documents and their mediation into the public sphere, thus improving access. They should foster the use of the Memory of the World Programme as a catalyst for such innovative activities.

4.4 Through legislation and policy, Member States are encouraged to create a stable, enabling environment that will give incentives to sponsors, foundations and other external parties to support relevant institutions and, with them, to invest in the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage in the public interest.

4.5 Member States are encouraged to periodically review copyright codes and legal deposit regimes to ensure they are fully effective for preserving and accessing documentary heritage in all its forms.

4.6 Where preserving and accessing documentary heritage requires the use of software or other proprietary technology not covered by copyright exceptions, Member States are encouraged to require centralised escrow deposits that will guarantee permanent access by relevant institutions to proprietary codes, keys and unlocked versions of technology.

4.7 Member States should encourage the use of internationally recognised open source software for managing digital documentary heritage, and seek the cooperation of software and hardware developers in extracting data and content from proprietary technologies. Likewise, their relevant institutions should aim for international standardisation and interchangeability of cataloguing methods and standards.

4.8 Member States are invited to support the Memory of the World Programme in monitoring the progress of policy initiatives affecting documentary heritage, including monitoring the status of documentary heritage inscribed on relevant Memory of the World registers.

## **5. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

5.1 In view of the need to intensify national and international co-operation and exchanges, in particular through the pooling of human and material resources to assist research and the protection and preservation of documentary heritage, Member States should support the exchange of research data, publications, and information; the training and exchange of specialist personnel and equipment; and the organization of meetings, study courses and working groups on particular subjects, such as cataloguing, risk management, identification of endangered documentary heritage and modern research.

5.2 Member States should encourage cooperation with international and regional professional associations, institutions and organizations concerned with documentary heritage preservation and access, with a view to implementing bilateral or multilateral research projects and publishing guidelines, policies and best practice models.

5.3 Subject to legitimate restrictions, Member States should be able to request from other countries copies of documentary heritage that relates to their own culture, shared history or heritage, and of other identified documentary heritage, which has been the object of preservation work in the country concerned.

5.4 To the best of their ability, Member States should take all necessary measures to safeguard their documentary heritage against all human and natural dangers to which it is exposed, including the risks deriving from armed conflicts, occupation of territories, or public disorders of other kinds. Likewise, they should refrain from acts likely to damage documentary heritage or diminish its value or impede its dissemination or use, whether it is to be found on the territory of one Member State or on the territory of other States.

5.5 Member States should strengthen their cooperation with the Memory of the World Programme through their relevant institutions by establishing national Memory of the World committees and registers, where they do not yet exist. This should include among others, development of academic curricula for digital preservation, as well as networking activities at national, regional and international levels for more effective implementation of Memory of the World Programme, and the promotion of exchanges of experiences among UNESCO Member States based on best practice models shared by different national and regional MOW committees.

\* \* \*

The General Conference recommends that Member States should apply the following provisions concerning the preservation of and access to documentary heritage by taking whatever legislative measures or other steps may be required, in conformity with the constitutional practice of each State, to give effect, within their respective territories to the principles, measures and norms set forth in this Recommendation.

The General Conference recommends that Member States bring this Recommendation to the attention of the appropriate authorities and bodies.

The General Conference recommends that Member States should report to it, by the dates and in a manner to be determined by it, on the action they have taken to give effect to this Recommendation.