

# ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MEMORY OF THE WORLD (MOWCAP)

## REPORT TO MOW INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 2007

This report principally covers the activities of MOWCAP since the previous IAC meeting in June 2005.

MOWCAP comprises the delegates of the (currently) 13 national MOW committees in the Asia Pacific region. A further 6 countries have identified with MOWCAP as observers. Additional national committees are in the process of formation. For operational purposes MOWCAP relates to, and is accredited by, the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

MOWCAP's statutes, minutes of meetings, and other documentation is available on its website at [www.unesco.mowcap.org](http://www.unesco.mowcap.org)

### Background

MOWCAP embraces UNESCO's Asia-Pacific area – that is, the 45 countries bounded by Mongolia in the north, New Zealand in the South, the Pacific island countries in the east, and Iran and the “stan” countries in the west. Notable characteristics of the region are:

- Political, linguistic and cultural diversity
- Economic disparity. Most countries are part of the “third world”.
- Population size ranging from the world's largest (China at 1.3 billion) to smallest (Niue at 2000)
- Its size and the tyranny of distance. Much of the Asia Pacific is ocean, many countries are islands, travel and communication is costly.
- Cultures of great richness and antiquity, yet many nation states are relatively young in their present form. A general history of colonization creates particular issues in the repatriation of documentary heritage.
- Many countries are tropical, with temperature/ humidity destructive of documentary heritage.
- Archives, libraries and museums often lack adequate funds, infrastructure and skills.
- Contains almost 50% of the world's population and 25% of UNESCO member countries.

### Goodwill patron mission: March-July 2005<sup>1</sup>

Dr Rujaya Abhakorn was appointed as MOWCAP's “Goodwill Patron” by the UNESCO regional office and undertook an extensive series of visits to Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam where he called on relevant organisations and met with government officials and senior representatives of collecting institutions. The purpose was to bring together the key individuals whose support would be needed in setting up a national MOW committee, to spend time discussing the program and its benefits, to talk about practicalities and offer mentoring assistance in establishing the committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr Rujaya's report on his mission is available on request.

This is proving to be a successful strategy. Dr Abhakorn's patient work has borne fruit with the subsequent establishment of a national MOW committee in Indonesia, and continuing positive contact with the other countries. He will continue to exercise his role as opportunities arise.

## **Strategic report – September 2005<sup>2</sup>**

A UNESCO-commissioned progress report on the development of MOW in the region was completed in September 2005. Among the principal findings:

- While the region has been equitably represented, over time, on the IAC, this has not been the case on its subcommittees.
- Of the 120 inscriptions on the International MOW Register, only 26 are from the region (compared to, for example, 63 from Europe).
- Of the 21 MOW projects listed on the main MOW website, only one is from the region.
- Of 66 national MOW committees listed on the main website, 13 are in the region, and details on most of these are minimal. Two national registers are known to exist. This configuration appears typical of the MOW program as a whole.

The report further noted that although the beginnings of MOWCAP go back almost to the beginnings of MOW itself, its story has been largely one of good intentions and false starts. The first full MOWCAP meeting had been in 1998 and a second one had yet to occur. There had been a series of experts' and Bureau meetings between 1994 and 2004.

The report's recommendations, which included the establishment of a website and the achievement of specific outcomes at the next MOWCAP meeting, have been followed.

## **Second MOWCAP meeting – Manila, Philippines, November 2005**

The second MOWCAP meeting was held from 7 – 9 November 2005: a two-day general meeting was followed by a one day workshop.

The meeting received the above reports, together with reports from the outgoing Bureau and from individual countries. It adopted formal statutes and election rules, and elected a new Bureau and subcommittee chairs. It reviewed the subcommittees and established guidelines and criteria for the regional Asia Pacific MOW register. It adopted a forward plan. The agenda also included a lengthy discussion on the setting up and operation of national MOW committees.

30 delegates from 15 countries attended the meeting. Minutes and agenda papers are on the website.

## **The MOWCAP Bureau**

The mandate of the original Bureau, elected in 1998, expired in 2002. Since then the Bureau had been in "interim" mode pending election of its replacement. The chair, Dato' Habibah Zon, retired as Director General of the National Archives of Malaysia in 2004, so her successor in that post, Datuk Rahani Jamil, replaced her as Interim Chair for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Bureau (9-10 December 2004 and 6 November 2005). Minutes of both meetings are on the website.

---

<sup>2</sup> The report was prepared by Ray Edmondson and is available on request.

A new Bureau and other office holders were elected on 8 November 2005 for a 4-year term, as follows.

Chair: Ray Edmondson (Australia)

Vice-chair: Carmen Padilla (Philippines)

Secretary General: Simon F.K. Chu (China)

UNESCO Regional Adviser: Susanne Ornager (UNESCO Regional Office, Bangkok)

Mr Guo Shuyin (China) was appointed as chair of the Editorial Subcommittee (he has since retired and a replacement is being sought). The meeting endorsed the continuation of Dr Rujaya Abhakorn as Goodwill Patron. The post of Chair of the Register Subcommittee was left vacant at this point; subsequently the Bureau appointed Dr Abhakorn to this role. The Bureau has also appointed Ms Sarah Choy and Ms Sunkyung Lee as Special Advisors.

### **The MOWCAP Website [www.unesco.mowcap.org](http://www.unesco.mowcap.org)**

The website was progressively set up during 2006 by the Secretary General, Simon Chu, who also serves as webmaster. The site is hosted by the Public Records Office of Hong Kong.

### **MOWCAP Regional Register**

Following the adoption of Guidelines at the 2<sup>nd</sup> MOWCAP meeting, the MOWCAP Register Subcommittee has been set up and a call for nominations placed on the website. At the time of writing, members of the Subcommittee are: Dr Rujaya Abhakorn (Thailand, chair), Mr Setareki Tale (Fiji), Mr Ralph Regenvanu (Vanuatu), and Dr Alla Aslitudinova (Tajikistan). It is expected there will be one or two additional members shortly. The Subcommittee will initially conduct its meetings electronically. The deadline for the inaugural intake of nominations is 31 October 2007. The Subcommittee will present its recommendations to the 3<sup>rd</sup> MOWCAP meeting in February 2008, and the successful inscriptions will be announced following that meeting.

### **Mentoring and consultation**

In addition to the informal contact that occurs constantly within the MOWCAP network it is worth noting the following recent and future events as indicative of the developing pattern:

May 2007 – MOW workshop at the National Library of Indonesia, Jakarta. This was organized by the new Indonesian MOW Committee and included the participation of the MOWCAP chair. The workshop focused on several potential nominations for the MOWCAP and International Registers that are currently in development.

July 2007 - MOW workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This week-long program is being organized by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and participants will come from a range of collecting institutions. The MOWCAP chair will participate. The topics will include practical preservation and collection management issues.

August 2007 – MOW seminar in Nong Khai, Thailand organized by the Thai MOW Committee. This event will involve the MOWCAP chair and the Goodwill Patron. Participants will come from Thailand and Laos and the event will focus on the audiovisual heritage, including collections of traditional music.

## **Raising awareness**

Raising awareness of the MOW program across the Asia Pacific region is challenging and involves many different tasks. In addition to those mentioned above, the Bureau has pursued the following ideas:

*Bookmarks* – a range of four, highlighting items of documentary heritage from the region (warning: these are likely to become collectors' items themselves!)

*Coffee table book* – modeled on an elegant production by the China National MOW Committee, this will illustrate and contextualize items of documentary heritage across the region, including those inscribed on the MOWCAP and International Registers

*MOW CAP* – this means what it says: an MOW-branded cap which will be sold as a fundraiser! Designs are in place: production practicalities are being looked at.

## **National programs**

This report does not cover the individual activities of national MOW committees in the region...that would make it far too long. National reports (as of December 2005) are on the MOWCAP website as agenda papers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> MOWCAP meeting – see [Annex H](#) to the minutes of that meeting.

## **Regional office support and financing**

MOWCAP's operating resources come from many quarters – from the immense amount of volunteer time devoted to its work, and the costs-in-kind absorbed by supportive institutions. The direct financial costs have been largely met by UNESCO's Regional Office in Bangkok, which has assisted – among other things – the travel costs of the Chair and other MOWCAP officers to the various meetings and workshops.

## **On the horizon**

The next MOWCAP meeting will be held in Canberra, Australia on 17-18 February 2008 – end-to-end with the 3<sup>rd</sup> International MOW Conference, which commences 19 February. It will be organized by the Australian MOW Committee and hosted by the National Library of Australia. This proximity gives the MOWCAP meeting special significance. For further details, monitor the MOWCAP website or the Australian MOW website at [www.amw.org.au](http://www.amw.org.au)

Ray Edmondson  
Chair, MOWCAP

5 June 2007