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## Acknowledgements

The Memory of the World Program would like to thank MEXT for its continued support in achieving its mission. We thank our partners and colleagues who implement the project at the regional level. We also thank the contributors to this report. For information on upcoming events, please refer to the Memory of the World website.

# I. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Launched in 1992, the UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme aims to facilitate the preservation of the world's documentary heritage, ensure its universal accessibility, and raise awareness of the importance of protecting collective memory from irrevocable loss. It operates in line with the 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage, including in digital form.

With the aim of promoting an integrated approach to disaster management for the sustainable preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage, the Memory of the World Programme draws firmly on the international agreement Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. To this end, the project “Preservation of Documentary Heritage Through Policy Development and Capacity Building” was launched with the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology (MEXT) of the Government of Japan through the UNESCO Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT). The project was implemented from 2018 to 2022 and established the origin of the cooperation with Japan.

Throughout this period, the project has enabled UNESCO Member States to improve their policy frameworks on documentary heritage preservation, incorporating strategies for disaster risk reduction and management, while building capacities for such preservation among memory institutions. As such, a series of Global Policy Forums, consultations, and capacity building workshops held within the framework of the project saw stakeholders benefit globally, with special attention drawn to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, where disaster management trainings were held for the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions.

Considering the need to further upscale a culture of disaster risk reduction into the Programme’s mission, a second phase of the project, entitled “**Consolidating the Gains in Policy Development and Capacity Building for the Preservation and Accessibility of Documentary Heritage**”, was launched in June 2022, in increased cooperation with the Government of Japan.

The expected impact of the project is that over the next three years of implementation, more documentary heritage around the world will be safeguarded against disasters to strengthen universal access to it. This is intended to be achieved through the following two main outcomes:

1. Policy-makers and memory institutions have further developed policies and strategies on preservation, access and awareness, in line with the 2015 Recommendation and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
2. The capacities of memory institutions in the target countries have been enhanced to make documentary heritage collections more resilient and accessible.

This report informs on three of the activities undertaken in the framework of the second phase of the project from June 2022 to March 2023, while increasing awareness among stakeholders and partners for their involvement in upcoming activities.

Through the implementation of the project “**Consolidating the Gains in Policy Development and Capacity Building for the Preservation and Accessibility of Documentary Heritage**”, the Memory of the World Programme contributes the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):



## SDG 4

Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Target 4.7)



## SDG 11

Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Target 11.4, 11.5 and 11.b)



## SDG 16

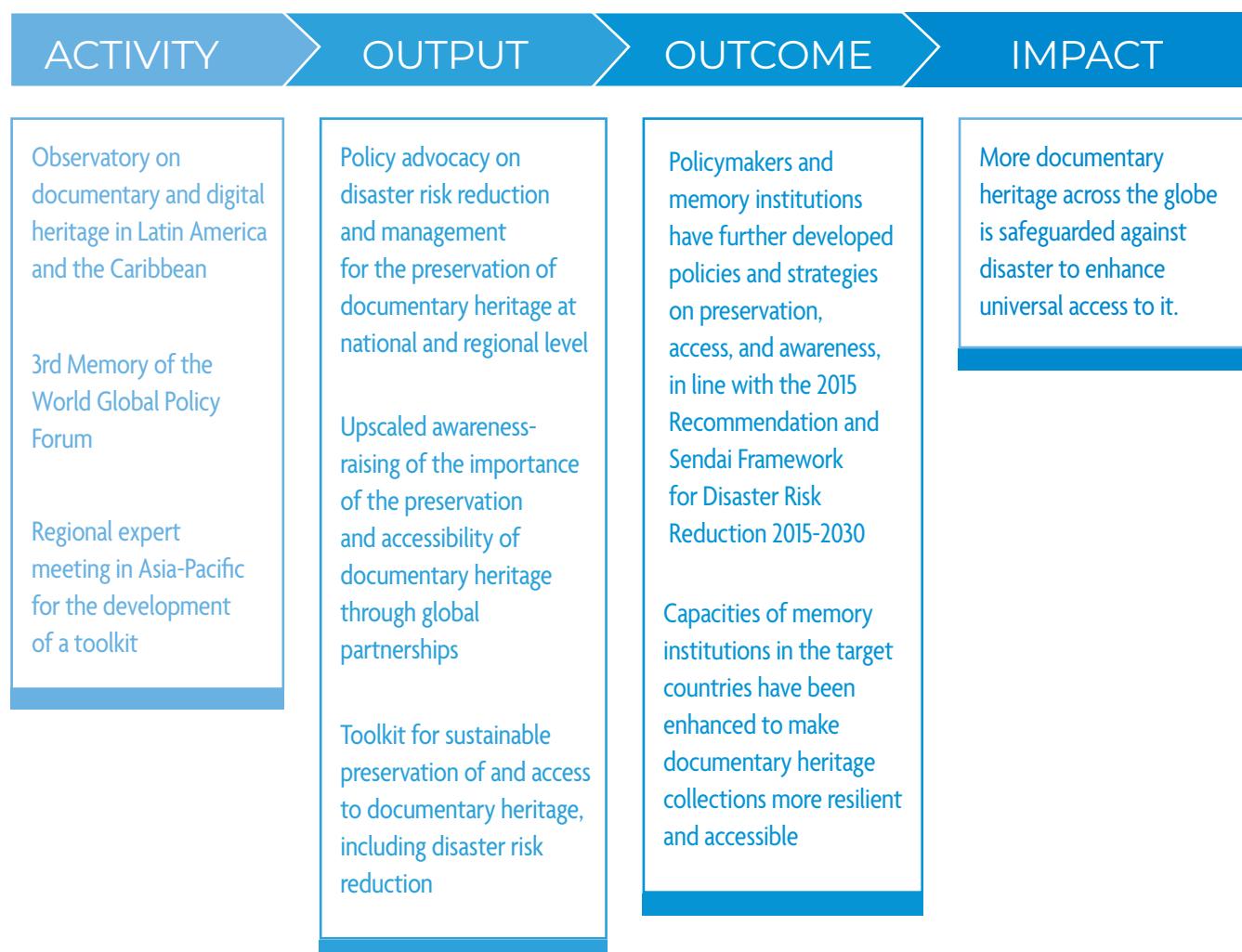
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Target 16.10)

## II. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE OUTCOMES

The project “**Consolidating the Gains in Policy Development and Capacity Building for the Preservation and Accessibility of Documentary Heritage**” is being implemented by the Documentary Heritage Unit, the Secretariat of the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme. In strengthened cooperation with stakeholders, the regional activities have been undertaken in coordination with UNESCO Montevideo and Bangkok offices. In addition to extending the implementation strategy by working closer with UNESCO’s partners, this phase has allowed for deepening cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan as co-organizer of one of the activities to date.

The activities undertaken from June 2022 until March 2023 include the development of an Observatory on documentary and digital heritage in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, a regional expert meeting in the Asia-Pacific region, and the 3rd MoW Global Policy Forum. Within the framework of the contributions of JFIT, the Memory of the World initiative to Safeguard Documentary Heritage at Risk is soon to be launched, in synergy with the ongoing project.

The following chart shows how these activities contribute to delivering the outputs to ultimately reach the expected outcomes of the project:



## 1. 3rd Memory of the World Global Policy Forum

The 3rd Memory of the World Global Policy Forum (MoWGPF) "Enhancing International Cooperation to better Safeguard Documentary Heritage at Risk" was jointly organized and hosted with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) of Japan and held in Tokyo on 21–22 November 2022. The event provided an opportunity to continue to raise awareness on policy development for the preservation of documentary heritage at risk while strengthening cooperation with global partners. The Forum aimed to:

1. Increase participants' knowledge and understanding about safeguarding documentary heritage at risk by taking advantage of existing and potential international cooperation mechanisms.
2. Demonstrate and launch new initiatives/projects/funds aimed at enhancing international cooperation for effective safeguarding of documentary heritage at risk.
3. Solidify the emerging global partnerships for safeguarding documentary heritage at risk.

The event follows two successful editions held during the first phase of the project that gathered over 1,000 participants globally. From these discussions, the Strategic Framework for UNESCO's Action for the Sustainable Preservation of Documentary Heritage through Disaster Risk Reduction and Management emerged, providing a mechanism for action that incorporates actionable strategies for stakeholders to sustainably preserve and provide access to documentary heritage<sup>1</sup>.

### Key achievements

- Statements of commitment from key partners on enhancing global partnerships and on supporting the Memory of the World Programme in its mission, through the participation of:
  - President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).
  - Deputy Director of the State Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Sport, Spain (coordinator of the Iberarchivos initiative, laureate of the 6th edition of the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize in 2016).

- Vice-president of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Scientific Committee on Risk Preparedness (ICORP). The Committee participated for the first time in a Memory of the World Programme event and creates an opportunity for further cooperation in the Programme's future activities.
- High online assistance consisting of 484 virtual and 90 in-person attendants. The latter mainly include the managements of Japanese national memory institutions.
- 90% attendants have increased their awareness on global partnerships for safeguarding documentary heritage at risk, as expressed in a follow-up survey.

### Enhanced cooperation with Japan

The launch of the project through the celebration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> MoWGPF marks a milestone of enhanced cooperation with the government of Japan since 2018. For the first time, the Memory of the World Programme held a Global Policy Forum in Tokyo working alongside MEXT as a co-organizer and co-host.

Through months of collaborative work with its Japanese partnership, the Memory of the World Programme conveyed governmental representatives as well as its key partners to be part of the expert panel discussions. Its Japanese counterpart facilitated the participation of key national stakeholders, notably of senior ministerial representatives to join the discussion, including the participation of the Vice-Minister of MEXT in the opening session of the Forum as well as the Assistant Minister for International Affairs of MEXT in the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Programme held on the day prior to the discussions.

Japanese national memory institutions as well as experts from academia, research institutions and technology were convened, ensuring a diverse representation of stakeholders. Notably, the memory institutions and custodians of documentary heritage listed in the Japanese National Memory of the World Register were involved in the event through the hosting of a panel exhibition at the Forum venue showcasing the country's inscribed items.

<sup>1</sup> Available in: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380655>



Expert of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties presents the types of washi paper and its use in restoration practices. Photo ©UNESCO/Nobuo Arai



Posters and risk mitigation handbooks are among the materials used to raise awareness about the conservation of cultural property, including documentary heritage.

Photo ©UNESCO/Nobuo Arai



Presentation on preservation and accessibility methods of selected historical documents in the Reading Room of the National Archives of Japan.  
Photo ©UNESCO/Nobuo Arai

Ties were also strengthened with the National Archives of Japan and with the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Tokyo. The two national memory institutions hosted a group of memory institutions representatives, Memory of the World Regional committee partners and professional association members to exchange the expertise in traditional conservation practices and disaster management through a tour of the facilities.

### **Impact on target groups**

Holding the event in Tokyo has allowed increased involvement of participants from the Asia-Pacific (39%) over other regions as a result of the in-person participation of more than 80 regional stakeholders. An important focus for the project's impact is on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States from Africa (SIDS), which combined accounted for 12% of participation. Participating SIDS included Mauritius, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Guinea-Bissau, Nauru, Aruba and Marshall Islands.

Regional participation of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean combined, two of the project's target regions, was of nearly 25% (Figure 1: Participation by region). In upcoming activities that call for global participation, more online meeting schedules will be considered to allow more participants from across the globe to join the event.

UNESCO is pleased to report that 50% of the in-person and online participation in the flagship activity of the project represented its key direct beneficiaries, consisting of experts and representatives of memory institutions and governmental entities. The types of memory institutions included national archives, libraries and museums, film, and audiovisual archives. Governmental beneficiaries comprised policy-makers from ministries, Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and National Commissions for UNESCO (Figure 2: Participation by institutional affiliation).

International organizations involved included the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and representatives of national and regional Memory of the World Committees. Professional associations comprised, among others, associations dedicated to the conservation of heritage and national library associations from Malaysia and Philippines.

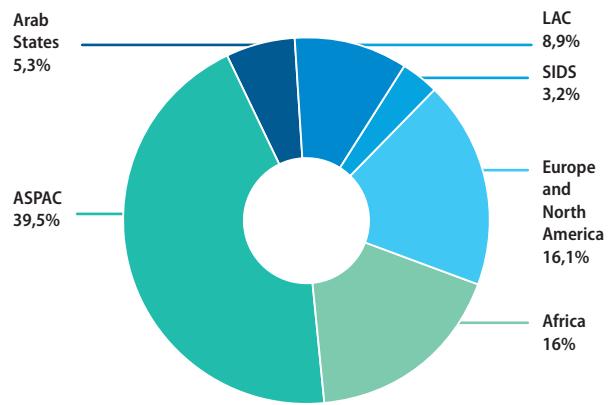


Figure 1: Participation by region

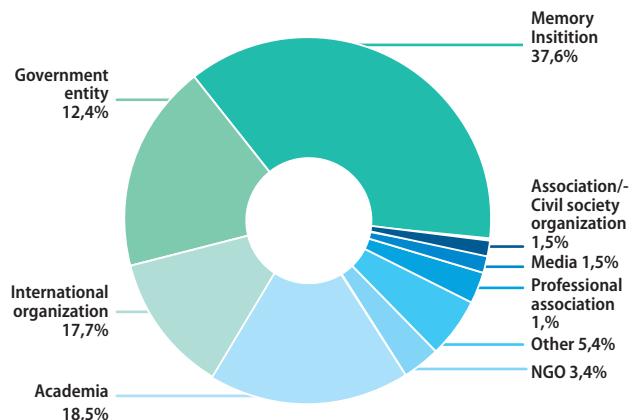


Figure 2: Participation by institutional affiliation

### Cross-sectoral safeguarding approaches

The Forum discussions addressed the issue of safeguarding documentary heritage at risk from increasing natural and human-made disasters. In the opening address, Mr. Hiroshi Okumura expressed a community approach dedicated to safeguarding historical documents and importantly, on how compiling testimonies following a disaster can foster a space in which civil society contributes to effectively building back better, one of the four priority areas of action that propose the Strategic Framework for UNESCO's Action for the Sustainable Preservation of Documentary Heritage through Disaster Risk Reduction and Management.

Examples of existing capacity building initiatives, such as train-the-trainer workshops, were seen as replicable in SIDS and LDCs. This particular initiative has the potential to maximize networks, creating support systems that can respond effectively when an institution is affected by disasters. As mentioned, it is a necessary step to be taken in the Latin American and the Caribbean region to have a network of experts who can provide technical response in case of disasters, and they can learn this practice from Asia and the Pacific, with which it shares similarities in terms of cultural and geographical diversity.

The initiatives that can provide a path towards the safeguarding of documentary heritage at risk from conflict, war and human-made hazards were also presented. Throughout the discussion, different expert approaches were shared along with the best practices, challenges and needs encountered in the face of recent disasters. In this context, the importance of further integrating international cooperation in safeguarding initiatives was underlined, leading to close the Forum with statements on the commitment for preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage at risk going forward, from the ministerial and professional-associational levels.



Expert panel on human-made hazards. In the foreground: Ms Barbara Lison, President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).  
Photo ©UNESCO/Nobuo Ariai



*“Safeguarding regional historical materials and inheriting them to next generations is widely understood to be valuable among Japanese citizens, and it influences to start similar activities in foreign countries.”*

**Mr Hiroshi Okumura, Professor and Executive Vice-President of Kobe University, Japan**



3rd Memory of the World Global Policy Forum participants.  
Front row: Ms Okamura Naoko, Japan; Ms Ana Ribeiro, Uruguay;  
Mr Tawfik Jelassi, UNESCO; Mr Jackson Branda, UNESCO  
and Mr Kamata Kaoru of National Archives of Japan.  
Photo ©UNESCO/Nobuo Ari

### **Increased awareness on safeguarding initiatives**

In a follow-up survey of participants, 100% of respondents state that they have increased their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding documentary heritage at risk through enhanced international cooperation after participation in the Forum. In addition, 90% have indicated an increased awareness of emerging global partnerships.

With regard to the thematic discussion sessions on human-induced and natural disasters, 49% of the participants were especially interested in the former to learn about existing international cooperation initiatives with a focus on conflict, war and pollution.

*"I found it very important to highlight the development of heritage conservation of the communities close to the sites at risk."*

Anonymous participant

On the other hand, 28% of participants were particularly interested to learn about safeguarding initiatives through disaster risk reduction and international cooperation in the event of natural disasters. A remaining percentage indicated their interest in learning about initiatives with a cross-sectoral approach for the safeguarding of documentary and historical documents, as illustrated through case studies in the keynote speech.

Apart from discovering new global initiatives, 60% of responses indicate how the 3rd MoWGP has allowed them to become aware of policy development for the preservation and accessibility documentary heritage at risk at national and international level. Over half of the participants expressed how the event has been useful to learn the best practices to safeguard documentary heritage.

*"Thank you for this opportunity to learn from the experts in our field. Please include me in your other future trainings from which my institution and country will benefit from the skills that I will develop in attending such events."*

Anonymous participant

Participants have taken the opportunity to express the need of engaging in activities on emergency preparedness in developing regions such as French-speaking Africa and East Africa. Going forward, the project will continue to implement activities in this region.

*"Our sincere thanks to the UNESCO Memory of the World and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for giving us the opportunity to take part in this event."*

Anonymous participant

## 2. Observatory on documentary and digital heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Observatory on documentary and digital heritage consists of an interactive digital platform that will allow stakeholders in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, including memory institutions, documentary heritage custodians, and relevant partners in the region and sub-regions, to access and monitor specific information to assess the potential risk of documentary heritage collections. The activity is being undertaken since August 2022.

The Observatory will initially integrate over 200 documentary heritage items inscribed in the Memory of the World Latin America and Caribbean (MoWLAC) Regional Register. One of the main features of the web-based platform will incorporate a geo-referenced risk map that informs on the risks faced by each documentary heritage through a color-coded alert scale. The risk level of these items is being assessed through a survey that is currently being conducted among the collections' custodians or holding institutions.

An important component of the platform will be to include an alert system or mechanism that can issue a notification in the event of a disaster. The feature is beneficial for the disaster-prone region, especially to the Small Island Developing States which are the most vulnerable in the area. The Observatory will also serve as a space for exchange among the regional stakeholders, as selected representatives will have access the platform to monitor information on the collection's status and risk levels.

Importantly, in view of integrating a gender perspective into the activity, a gender-based

assessment of each document contained in the documentary heritage collections will be conducted. The approach will be applied as more documentary heritage collections are added to the Observatory, including the 17 newly inscribed items to the MoWLAC Regional Register in November 2022<sup>2</sup>.

### Key achievements

As of August 2022, the activity has been coordinated and implemented through the UNESCO Montevideo office in cooperation with the Memory of the World Programme Secretariat. Key achievements to date include:

- Validation of the basis of a protocol to manage the contents of the platform as well as the definition of roles to be fulfilled by the MoWLAC Regional Committee, memory institutions, experts, and the UNESCO Secretariat.
- The protocol ensures the sustainability of this initiative in terms of content inputs and management.
- An online risk survey questionnaire has been developed to assess the risks that threaten each of the MoWLAC documentary heritage inscribed items. The survey is being conducted among documentary heritage custodians and memory institutions.
- A gender-based assessment of the MoWLAC documentary heritage collections will be incorporated.

### Gender Equality assessment in the Memory of the World Programme

UNESCO's Global Priority on Gender Equality upholds that women and men, boys and girls, enjoy equal opportunities, choices, capabilities, power and knowledge as equal citizens. As such, the Observatory on documentary and digital heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean will include a gender equality baseline survey to analyse the gender sensitivity of inscriptions from the region, with a view to further integrating a gender perspective into the Memory of the World Programme and processes.

The survey will enhance South-South and triangular cooperation through exchanges with Asia-Pacific stakeholders who were engaged in the Gender Equality Baseline Study<sup>3</sup> of Memory of the World in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Gender Equality Baseline Study assessed the degree of gender sensitivity in 155 MoW inscriptions specifically from the Asia-Pacific region by adapting and applying UNESCO's Gender Equality Marker (GEM) to the inscriptions, revealing the need to apply in early nomination process and in further Programme activities.

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/news/mowlac-regional-committee-announces-incorporation-17-new-heritage-documents-memory-world>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372840>

## The colonial council of the Villa de Medellin: Colonia Section, Fondo Concejo, AHM

The Medellin Colonial Mayoralty: Colonial Section, Council Fond, Historical Archive of Medellin

Register Year: 2014

The most ancient documents of the city form the collection of the colonial town hall of the Medellin Colonial Mayoralty.

There are original manuscripts that, from 1638, explain the facts and life experiences of different authorities and settlers of the location, in a part of the territory of the Royal Audience of the new Kingdom of Granada.



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.  
 Credits

A list of the risks faced by a registered documentary heritage collection will be presented by level and type

### Risks encountered

#### Environmental issues

Identified risks	Level of risk
Moisture	●
Temperature	●
Light (visible light, ultraviolet radiation, etc.)	●
Dust	●
Pollution	●
Pests (rodents, animals, insects, etc.)	●
Microorganisms (bacteria, mould, etc.)	●
Other: Lorem ipsum sit dolor	●

#### Management or organizational issues

Identified risks	Level of risk
Lack of maintenance, including cleaning	●
Inadequate building	●
Building with structural damage	●
Lack of an adequate warehouse	●
Lack of boxes and/or archive materials	●
Lack of human resources	●
Lack of security measures	●
Insufficient budget to operate	●
Other: Lorem ipsum sit dolor	●

#### Natural disasters risks

Identified risks	Level of risk
Fires	●
Rains	●
Mudslides or landslides	●
Floods	●
Hurricanes, cyclones, storms	●
Earthquakes	●
Tsunamis	●
Volcanic eruptions	●
Temperature increase	●
Other: Lorem ipsum sit dolor	●

#### Political and/or social risks

Identified risks	Level of risk
Armed conflicts	●
Illegal traffic of documents	●
Vandalism	●
Threatening socio-cultural environment	●
Lack of support/public policies	●
Other: Lorem ipsum sit dolor	●

#### Environmental location issues

Identified risks	Level of risk
Furniture	●
Room or warehouse	●
Building	●
Site or neighborhood	●
Area or region, beyond the neighborhood	●
Other: Lorem ipsum sit dolor	●

### Preservation actions

Actions	Level of risk
Existence of a conservation/preservation Plan	Yes
Existence of a response protocol in case of natural disasters	Partially
State of digitalization	Yes, partially
On-line availability for public access	No

During the Regional meeting, the MoWLAC Regional Committee encouraged memory institutions and their corresponding sub-regions to use the platform, and at a later stage of development to participate in content creation, contributing to populating the platform with relevant information, and, in general, building a community of experts around the Observatory.

Activities to follow the launch of the Observatory are likely to include setting up a series of capacity building webinars with the holding memory institutions, custodians, and experts, to introduce the platform and explain its potential benefits and knowledge-sharing capacities. Awareness raising activities will be conducted outside of the LAC region, may be scaled up to cover more regions, increase the number of users, and to add more features based on the specific needs.

### 3. Regional expert meeting in Asia-Pacific

Organized in cooperation with the UNESCO Bangkok office, the “**Documentary Heritage at Risk in Asia and the Pacific: Experts meeting**” gathered professionals with a diverse range of experiences and expertise from Asia-Pacific and beyond, from 28 February to 2 March 2023. This included professionals with a specialization in post-disaster recovery, researchers in the field of community engagement in the context of heritage and disaster risk reduction management, library and information science specialists, audiovisual experts, as well as digital preservation and green data consultants.

Through a workshop-like approach, participants identified key needs and challenges to further elaborate on the potential solutions to improve disaster risk reduction management and access to information in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting was carried out in three modules:

1. Experiences and challenges from Asia-Pacific
2. Capacity-building and resources for disaster management
3. Designing a new toolkit: combining knowledge to raise awareness and capacity

Key findings and recommendations will structure the contents of the practical toolkit for sustainable preservation and access to documentary heritage which will also draw from the existing guidelines and resources responding to the training needs.

#### Key achievements

- Participating regional and international experts, as well as invited international observers include representatives from national memory institution, National Commission for UNESCO, National Memory of the World Committees.
- Participation the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA), key partner to the project.
- The meeting laid the groundwork for the development of toolkit for sustainable preservation and access to documentary heritage for Asia-Pacific.



Regional experts gather for the meeting Documentary Heritage at Risk in Asia and the Pacific, March 2023  
Photo ©UNESCO/Cedric Arnold

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The project “Consolidating the Gains in Policy Development and Capacity Building for the Sustainable Preservation of Documentary Heritage” has significantly advanced in its implementation since June 2022. The project builds on a previous phase of cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan and seeks to continue to promote policy advocacy for the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage as well as for capacity building incorporating disaster risk reduction.

Considering its impact on the safeguarding of documentary heritage in archives, museums, libraries and research institutions globally, especially in SIDS and LDCs across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean which has given rise to a growing community of beneficiaries and stakeholders, UNESCO strongly encourages the continuation of collaboration through this project as a second phase that extends to 2025.

Throughout this period, it is expected that the stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the foreseen project activities, while enhancing global cooperation for the achievement of results. To this end, the following recommendations will ensure that our work in this period remains successful:

- Continue to enable an environment for policy advocacy by creating opportunities for engagement of policy makers in upcoming regional dialogues and consultations.
- Encourage the involvement of local and national memory institutions as well as documentary heritage custodians in awareness raising and capacity building activities for the safeguarding of documentary heritage that incorporate risk and disaster reduction strategies and management on a global level, especially in LDCs and SIDS.
- Continue to support the strengthening of global partnerships, including international non-governmental and professional associations, and the increasing cooperation with NGOs and the media sector through new initiatives.
- Engage in the development of further resources and tools for disaster risk reduction management for memory institutions based on the needs at the national and regional levels, with the possibility of extending and adapting these towards areas where documentary heritage is vulnerable to current disasters.
- Engage in the development of global mechanisms or frameworks for action for sustainable preservation of documentary heritage through disaster risk reduction.

## IV. MESSAGE FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS



**Ms Emilie  
Gagnet Leumas**

**Board Member of Blue Shield International,  
Chair of the International Council on Archives  
(ICA) Expert Group on Emergency Management  
and Disaster Preparedness**

In every geographical area of the world, there are disasters created by humans and nature. While each cultural heritage organization plans for evacuating buildings, protecting people and property, the same care, and attention to planning should be placed on the records and documentary heritage items in archives, libraries, and museums. If information and documentary heritage is an important asset, the planning for the protection of this cultural patrimony prior to a disaster is paramount.

As an archives and records management expert, I have led workshops that allow facilitators and participants to work together developing practical skills in disaster planning, response, recovery. Participants gain knowledge in the importance of safeguarding documentary heritage at risk through pre-workshop building assessments and hands-on activities that incorporate salvage techniques in simulated disaster scenarios.

I have had the privilege of working on MoW/JFIT trainings in Senegal (2021) and Australia (2019). Participants joined from across the region for the one to three-day onsite trainings which normally consist of the following learning objectives:

- Explain the importance of documentary heritage.
- Articulate key concepts and basic terminology in emergency management and disaster response.
- Summarize the impact of certain local and regional threats to collections.

- Prioritize collections and apply response and salvage techniques to wet materials.
- Use the tools and technologies during the preparation for, response to, and recovery from disasters that threaten documentary heritage material.
- Conduct a risk assessment and summarize ways to minimize potential risks.
- Develop a framework for a disaster management plan.
- Draft or update a disaster plan.

Onsite risk assessment is an important component in the trainings. When a site visit to a memory institution is possible, participants conduct risk assessments to understand, among other objectives, how other documentary heritage collections and memory institutions organize their holdings and prepare for emergencies. When visits are not possible, participants are encouraged to conduct a risk assessment in their institution through provided pre-workshop materials that will later be useful in drafting or updating their emergency plans.

As a second component, participants are equipped with salvage techniques through hands-on exercises in a scenario of water-damaged documents. With the exercises, they become familiar with the best practices to salvage paper-based and audiovisual materials and are able to reenact the procedures when disaster strikes at their institutions.

Finally, an essential goal of workshops and trainings is to build capacity and create communities of support. Creating networks allow documentary heritage experts to exchange best practices, techniques, and solutions. It's a network that can provide information in an emergency situation. Some conduct further trainings with participating institutions, provide train-the-trainer workshops and foster the creation of partnerships. The creation of such networks is a step forward in enhancing the capacities of memory institutions to make documentary heritage more accessible and resilient.



**Mr. Peter Scholing**

**President, UNESCO's Memory of the World Program Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean MoWLAC**

UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (MoWLAC), was established in June 2000 in Pachuca, Mexico, with the aim of promoting the Memory of the World Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean: to help preserve valuable documentary heritage, to raise awareness of its importance for present and future generations, and to provide access to documents.

The first nominations were added to the MoWLAC Regional Register in 2002. Since then, more than 200 archival and bibliographic inscriptions have been added to the MoWLAC Regional Register, of which 17 have been added during the 2022 cycle (the first call for nominations since 2018).

The Committee is composed of nine members appointed in a personal capacity, six of whom are from Latin America and three from the Caribbean, supported by two regional advisors, and with the UNESCO Montevideo Regional Office serving as its permanent Secretariat.

The LAC region is a very diverse and varied region, not only in its geography, diversity of peoples and languages, their customs, and expressions, but also in terms of the risks posed to heritage sites and heritage collections. Documentary heritage collections in the region face several risks, both natural and man-made (or human-induced), that threaten the preservation of and access to these collections.

The region's documentary heritage collections are vulnerable to a variety of natural risks, including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, humidity, drought, continued extreme temperatures and other disasters. These risks have the potential to cause significant damage to collections, especially if they are not properly stored and managed. In addition to natural risks, human-induced risks include armed conflict, civil unrest, theft, vandalism, inadequate funding and resources, and lack of proper management and conservation practices.

Climate change is also a growing concern for documentary heritage preservation in the region, as sea level rise and extreme weather events such as storms and floods can lead to damage or loss of collections, as well as displacement of communities and cultural heritage sites.

In order to mitigate these risks and concerns, and to address these challenges in providing continued access and preservation, my predecessors at MoWLAC envisioned the MoWLAC Observatory on Documentary and Digital Heritage.

Taking the opportunities that modern technology brings, the online MoWLAC Observatory will apply these technologies to increase the visibility of the region's rich documentary heritage, to set up a risk assessment and alerting system, and to enhance the region's own emergency response capability, while at the same time contributing to the realization of UNESCO 2015 Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage, including in digital form.

Thanks to the funding provided by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), the MoWLAC Observatory on Documentary and Digital Heritage will be launched officially in 2023, helping increase the visibility of the MoWLAC Register and the region's documentary heritage, as well as the risks facing it.

MoWLAC is very grateful to the Government of Japan for their continued support to the MoWLAC Observatory project and to documentary heritage in general.



**Ms. Cristina  
Diaz Martinez**

**Head of Institutional Relations of the General Sub-directorate of the Spanish State Archives and Technical Secretary of the Iberarchivos Programme**

The Spanish State Archives, due to their own historical development which goes beyond the current borders of the Spanish State, is an exceptional example of documentary heritage whose interest is shared with other countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia with which we are united by clear ties of cultural, administrative, and linguistic affinity, motivated by the existence of a shared history, in some cases of more than three centuries.

In this context, the commitment of the Spanish State Archives in different international cooperation actions for the preservation of the documentary heritage has been a priority since the 1990s, with special attention to the initiatives carried out within the framework of the Ibero-American Conference and its biannual Summits with governmental entities.

The Summits approve and mandate cooperation programmes in different sectors, one of these being Iberarchivos. The Iberarchivos programme oversees the preservation of and access to the common documentary heritage of Spain, Portugal and the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, or Ibero-America, within the Spanish State Archives.

The Iberarchivos programme, which currently includes 18 Ibero-American countries, provides different priority lines for preventive actions against the effects of natural and human-made disasters. From 1999 to 2022, 1,359 projects have been supported in 23 Ibero-American countries in a commitment of the Spanish State Archives to protect the shared documentary heritage of Latin American countries while providing its accessibility to citizens.

In this regard, Iberarchivos contributes directly to the objectives of the UNESCO Memory of the World programme through the development of policies and projects aligned with its mission, focused on Ibero-America. We also work to ensure that the documentary heritage belonging to these citizens is preserved and protected, in full recognition of the region's cultural diversity.

As such, Iberarchivos received the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize in 2016 in recognition of the work carried out and as a transcendental contribution to the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage as an element of the common heritage of humanity.

Finally, with the following examples, Iberarchivos shows how international cooperation is one of the solutions to safeguard documentary heritage at risk.

The programme has shown solidarity in the aftermath of natural disasters. We have directed recovery efforts after the Haiti earthquake in 2010 in cooperation with the General Archive of the Dominican Republic, carried out rehabilitation work in the National Archive of Puerto Rico after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, as well as in the cleaning and restoration of 100,000 affected archives of the Central Archive of the Supreme Court of Peru after a flood in 2020.

Archives are unique testimonies of the historical development of institutions and peoples. In order to understand our society, we must find the meaning of what we are in the documents of the past. We must therefore continue our cooperative efforts in the protection and accessibility of our shared memory and history.

## Contact

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