INTRODUCTION

The Memory of the World is the documented, collective memory of the peoples of the world – their documentary heritage – which in turn represents a large proportion of the world’s cultural heritage. It charts the evolution of thought, discovery and achievement of human society. It is the legacy of the past to the world community of the present and the future.

War and social disturbance, as well as severe lack of resources, have worsened problems which have existed for centuries. Significant collections worldwide have suffered a variety of fates. Looting and dispersal, illegal trading, natural causes, destruction, inadequate housing and funding have all played a part.

UNESCO has launched the Memory of the World Program to guard against collective amnesia calling upon the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world ensuring their wide dissemination.

Objectives of Memory of the World

- To facilitate preservation, by the most appropriate techniques, of the world’s documentary heritage.
- To assist universal access to documentary heritage.
- To increase awareness worldwide of the existence and significance of documentary heritage.

Why is documentary heritage important?

Documentary heritage in libraries and archives, museums and universities constitutes a major part of the memory of the peoples of the world and reflects the diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. But that memory is fragile.

Various carriers of the memory which are already endangered can vanish easily. Only if we take efforts, can we maintain those valuable legacies. Preservation of documentary heritage is one of feasible ways to keep those historical treasures fresh in our memory and make the history accessible to future generations.