CHAIRMAN’S REPORT TO 5th MOWCAP GENERAL MEETING, 14-16 MAY 2012, BANGKOK

This report covers the main activities of MOWCAP since the previous General Meeting in Macau in March 2010.

MOWCAP comprises the delegates of the national MOW committees and equivalent bodies in the Asia Pacific region, as defined in the MOWCAP statutes. MOWCAP relates to, and is accredited by, the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand.

MOWCAP’s statutes, minutes of meetings, and other documentation are available on its website at 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: first world to 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.

Origin, structure and character of MOWCAP

MOW General Guidelines provide for three types of MOW committees: international, regional and national. There are currently three regional committees: MOWLAC (Latin America and Caribbean), ARCMOW (Africa) and MOWCAP (Asia Pacific). The regional committees are the “glue” linking the national committees to each other and to the global programme.

MOWCAP grew out of regional “experts’ meetings” and formally convened for the first time in 1998.
For various reasons it was slow to get moving, but after UNESCO commissioned a strategic review in 2005, MOWCAP’s second General Meeting was held in Manila in November 2005. At that meeting, the current statutes, rules and guidelines were adopted. It was agreed that henceforth MOWCAP would meet in full session every two years, while the Bureau would meet annually. Accordingly, the following meetings have since taken place:

Bureau: 6-8 November 2006, Shanghai  
MOWCAP 3rd General Meeting and Bureau 2008: 16-18 February, Canberra  
Bureau: 2-4 February 2009, Bangkok  
MOWCAP 4th General Meeting and Bureau 2010: 7-9 March, Macau  
Bureau: 3-5 March 2011, Hanoi

Particular features of MOWCAP, shared – in part – by other MOW committees are:

- The elected **Bureau** which carries on the work of MOWCAP between General Meetings
- The **UNESCO Regional Advisor** who is an ex officio member of the Bureau, and is the formal linkage point with the full-time UNESCO structure
- The **Asia Pacific MOW Register**, which announced its first inscriptions on 2008  
- The **subcommittees** of the Bureau – the **Register Subcommittee** which manages the Asia Pacific MOW Register, and the **Publications Subcommittee**  
- The **Good will Patron** who mentors and encourages the growth of national MOW committees
- **Special advisors** who agree to lend their time and knowledge to the work of MOWCAP  
- Regular **workshops** hosted by national MOW committees
- A **website** ([www.unesco.mowcap.org](http://www.unesco.mowcap.org)) and a **newsletter**

This report does not cover the individual activities of national MOW committees in the region. National reports are separately presented and discussed at this meeting, and are already – or will be – posted on the website.

MOWCAP operates on a **voluntary basis**. All committee members, special advisors and many others who participate donate their time and energy. Only some of their travel, accommodation and incidental expenses are met..

**MOWCAP membership**

The number of accredited national MOW committees in the region is unclear. The main MOW website in Paris is out of date. To the best of our present knowledge there are now 16 national MOW committees:

- Australia  
- China  
- Fiji  
- Indonesia  
- Iran  
- Japan  
- Kyrgyzstan  
- Malaysia  
- Mongolia
New Zealand
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Tajikistan
Thailand
Vanuatu
Vietnam

In addition, UNESCO National Commissions in Cambodia and Republic of Korea and have an enthusiastic involvement in MOW, and there are other centres of interest in Singapore, Myanmar, Laos, Macau and Hong Kong. Since the 2010 meeting, national MOW committees have been established in New Zealand, Vanuatu and Japan. Further, participants in workshops were from many countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Samoa and Timor Leste.

In one way or another, almost all countries in the region have been touched by MOWCAP during the last two years.

The MOWCAP Bureau and Subcommittees

The present Bureau, which is at the mid-point of its four year term, comprises:

Ray Edmondson (Chair)
Carmen Padilla, Li Minghua, Setareki Tale (Vice Chairs)
Helen Swinnerton (Secretary General)
Susanne Ornager (ex officio: UNESCO Regional Advisor)
Rujaya Abhakorn (Chair of Register Subcommittee and Goodwill Patron)
Richard Engelhardt, Simon Chu, Sarah Choy (Special Advisors)

Jinsung Jeon, who has served for some years as a Special Advisor, took up a post at UNESCO in Paris during 2011 and had to relinquish his MOWCAP role.

Register Subcommittee

Dr Abhakorn served as Chair of the Register Subcommittee, which managed the biennial cycle of inviting and processing nominations for the Asia Pacific MOW Register. The Subcommittee’s report is considered as a separate agenda item.

The other members of the Subcommittee are Mr Setareki Tale, Mrs Hongmin Wang, Dr Alla Aslitdinova, Mr Ralph Regenvanu and Prof. Kyung-ho Suh.

Publications Subcommittee

Following the 2010 meeting, Richard Engelhardt took over as chair of this subcommittee, although its single project, the “Memory” coffee table book, evolved in such a way that for practical reasons it ceased to be a committee activity per se and management, on a project basis, passed to Simon Chu. Financial supporters include the State Archives Administration of China, the Australian national MOW committee, the UNESCO Bangkok office and a commercial publisher. Simon Chu will report
separately on the status of the project.

4th General Meeting

The 4th General Meeting of MOWCAP was held in Macau SAR, China on 17-18 March 2010. It attracted 57 participants and was hosted by the Macau Foundation and the Macau Documentation and Information Society.

4th MOWCAP General Meeting

MOW Registers

Several national MOW committees maintain national registers. They will report on these individually.

Heritage from the Asia Pacific region is also inscribed on the International MOW Register, and this presence is gradually increasing as a proportion of the whole. Several were added in 2011.

Asia Pacific MOW Register

There were 8 new inscriptions to the Asia Pacific Register at the MOWCAP General Meeting in March 2010, chosen through secret ballot by voting members. The ceremony for presentation of certificates was part of a celebratory dinner hosted by the Macau Foundation, and received excellent media coverage. The inscribed items are:

China: *Compendium of Materia Medica* and *The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Canon*
Fiji: *Documentary heritage of the Indian indentured labourers*
Macau SAR: *Archives and materials of the Macau Diocese from the 1550s to 1800s*
Mongolia: Lu. “Altan Tobchi”
New Zealand: The Tokyo War Crimes Trials 1946-1948
Philippines: Presidential papers of Manuel Luis Quezon
Vietnam: Stone stele records of Royal Examinations of the Le and Mac dynasties 1442-1779

Of particular interest was the inscription of the Archives and materials of the Macau Diocese, representing the first time that Macau has been recognised on a MOW Register. On a subsequent occasion, some Bureau members were able to inspect the collection, which is held in the house of the Bishop of Macau. The Macau Documentation and Information Society has published a colourful explanatory booklet about the collection.
The Bishop of Macau showing some of the collection to Helen Ieong (Macau Documentation and Information Society), Simon Chu and Sarah Choy (MOWCAP Special Advisors)

Other publications

Translations of the General Guidelines into Khmer and Chinese were completed, respectively, by the UNESCO office in Phnom Penh and the State Archives Administration of China.

An occasional MOWCAP newsletter has been established. This is distributed electronically about 3 times a year to members and other interested recipients, both inside and outside the Asia Pacific region.

A MOW Companion, a document designed to assist nominators in preparing their nominations, was added to the Paris website in 2011. Still a work in progress, the text was largely prepared by Ray Edmondson and “road tested” on workshop groups within the region.

Workshops and events

Participants in the audiovisual workshop
March 2010 – A Training program on MOW awareness raising and advocacy was held in Manila and was led by Belina Capul. Participants were drawn from across the region.

June 2010 – Memory of the World Initiation Meeting An awareness-raising gathering of interested parties in Wellington which was the springboard for setting up a national MOW committee in New Zealand. Ray Edmondson participated as a resource person, and the occasion was hosted by
November 2010 – Public seminar in **Hong Kong**, organised by the Archives Action Group: *From memory, archives and heritage: the UNESCO Memory of the World programme*. Speakers were Dr Luciana Duranti, Dr Lothar Jordan, Dr Rujaya Abhakorn and Ray Edmondson.

November 2010 – Regional seminar in **Macau** *World Documentary Heritage and the Memory Programme* organised by the Macau Documentation and Information Society. Participants included several members of the MOWCAP Bureau.

*Jakarta workshop group photo – formal attire courtesy of the Indonesian hosts!*

March 2011 - Korean National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with the National MOW Committee for Indonesia and other supporters, hosted the second 3-day Asia Pacific MOW Training Workshop, held in **Jakarta**. The purpose was to coach and mentor countries which are not yet represented on an MOW register to develop nominations. 10 participants were selected from a larger pool of applicants, and came to the workshop with draft nominations. Mentors were Roslyn Russell, Joie Springer, Dr Rujaya Abhakorn, Prof. Kyung-ho Suh and Ray Edmondson.

May 2011  The 4th International MOW Conference was held in Warsaw, Poland, and many delegates from Asia Pacific were in attendance. Among these, Bureau members Sarah Choy and Ray Edmondson presented papers and/or led workshops.

May 2011  Meeting of the MOW International Advisory Committee (IAC), Manchester, United Kingdom. The chairman presented MOWCAP’s biennial report.

August 2011 A MOW workshop was a feature of the biennial PARBICA conference, this time in Apia, Samoa. It was conducted by Ray Edmondson with the involvement of MOW committees from Vanuatu, Fiji and New Zealand.

September 2011 Rujaya Abhakorn, IAC chair Roslyn Russell and Ray Edmondson participated as
speakers in an international seminar for the millennial anniversary of the Tripitaka Koreana, held in Changwon, Republic of Korea.

*December 2011*  
International seminar on Qiaopi Studies, Guangzhou, China. Simon Chu, Rujaya Abkahorn and Ray Edmondson presented papers.

*May 2012*  
“MOW Experts’ Meeting” in Warsaw, Poland. Attended by several delegates from the Asia Pacific region (see separate report)

Forthcoming:

*August 2012*  
MOW Workshop at the Congress of the International Council on Archives (ICA), Brisbane, Australia

*October 2012*  
MOW Workshop at the conference of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ), Wellington, New Zealand

**A MOW Convention? Follow up from Fourth International MOW Conference**

At the International MOW Conference in Warsaw, the chair presented a paper outlining the need to assess the pros and cons of a possible MOW Convention. As indicated in our 2009 report to the IAC, this is an issue that has been on MOWCAP’s agenda for some time and resonates with members in Asia and the Pacific. It was assessed at the MOWCAP Bureau meeting in February 2011; subsequently MOWCAP members were circularised about the Bureau’s view in favour of a convention (see attachments), and were subsequently sent an advance draft for comment of the paper later presented by the chairman in Warsaw.

At the IAC meeting which immediately followed, there was a recommendation in the MOWCAP report to the IAC: **that the IAC proceed with definite action** to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a MOW Convention, and to establish what steps would be necessary to achieve it. This led to the creation of an email discussion group, whose report was presented to the “MOW Experts Meeting” in Warsaw in May 2012. Feedback on this Warsaw meeting will be verbally provided during the MOWCAP General 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 substantial costs in cash and kind absorbed or donated by individuals and supportive institutions, as well as UNESCO itself. Certain direct costs have been met by UNESCO’s Regional Office in Bangkok. It maintains MOWCAP’s “budget line” in its system.

As many will be aware, UNESCO is currently suffering severe financial stringency, and as a result only token funding was available for the 5th MOWCAP General Meeting. Unlike previous occasions, there was almost no money available to assist the travel and staying costs of needy delegates, and as a result several countries are absent from the Bangkok meeting. We can only hope that this limitation will not be repeated two years hence.
Acknowledgements

I want to record our special appreciation to the Thai National MOW Committee, the Thai Ministries of Education and Culture, The Thai National Commission for UNESCO, and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA) for everything they have done to make this meeting possible. It is literally only a few months ago that Thailand suffered severe and dramatic flooding, an event which has had profound practical and financial consequences, but here we all are nevertheless. I would like to particularly mention the support of Dr Rujaya Abhakorn and his staff at SEAMEO SPAFA, and of Ruben Cabezas Martinez at the Regional UNESCO office here in Bangkok. It is hard work organising a meeting like this and they have shouldered a huge amount of work.

This finally brings me to our redoubtable UNESCO Regional Advisor, Dr Susanne Ornager. This is Susanne’s last MOWCAP meeting as she is on the verge of retirement. It would be a profound understatement to say we will miss her. Susanne has been an unfailing supporter of MOW. Her role, as the formal link between the voluntary MOWCAP Bureau and the professional UNESCO organisation, requires her to be both an advocate and a consummate diplomat – and she is both. She has to judge when to speak up and when to bite her tongue. Such relationships require much give and take and they do not always work well. In MOWCAP’s case it has worked seamlessly and it is a tribute to Susanne that this is so. We wish her a long and productive retirement in her native Denmark and hope she will rest satisfied in the growth of MOWCAP on her watch.

Ray Edmondson
Chair, MOWCAP

8 May 2012
Possible UNESCO Convention on
the Protection and Promotion of Documentary Heritage

This document explains in brief the elements of a possible Convention. It provides a framework to help members understand what the proposed Convention may include. It is indicative only: the actual substance (the articles) to be drafted would be subject to further research and consultation.

The Convention would logically comprise the following:

1. **Background or Preamble** explains why there is the need for the Convention and what matters, related issues and circumstances have been considered.
2. **Objectives and Guiding Principles** elaborate the purpose of having the Convention and the legitimate grounds/reasons on which it is based.
3. **Scope of Application** spells out the parties, areas and matters to be governed by the Convention to ensure consistency and certainty.
4. **Definitions** explain the major terms used throughout the Convention.
5. **The Structure**: explain the organs that are responsible for performing the functions and business prescribed by the Convention, their membership, terms and mechanism of formation. This may involve the creation of a general assembly which represents all party states which sign and ratify the Convention. A committee (with sub committees) may be required to serve as the executive board of the general assembly for running the business and activities arising from the Convention. There may also be the need for a secretariat to be provided by UNESCO.
6. **Functions and Power** explains the legal obligations and responsibilities of the party states, the general assembly and the committee (intergovernmental) and/or sub committees (professional) to be set up and their relation with UNESCO in implementing the policy, the day-to-day management and other matters specified by the Convention.
7. **Rules of Procedures** lay down the binding rules and procedures for election, how decisions are made in the general assembly and the committee(s) and how disputes are settled, etc. It is common to empower the general assembly and the committee(s) to make or change their own rules where specified conditions are met.
8. **Measures/Programs** state what are required in protecting and promoting documentary heritage. This article would also elaborate the work to be done by the each member state, the general assembly, the committee(s) and international cooperation. The MOW registers, conservation and preservation activities, various educational and promotional workshops and development or exchange programs at national, regional and international levels may be included.
9. **Funding** provides the sources of income for discharging the functions and activities under the Convention. These may include establishing a designated fund (and its forms) which is entitled to receive [annual membership fees], contributions and gifts from member states and donors.
10. **Report and Audit** describes the types and periods of reports, targets of report submission and follow-up action.
11. **Advisory Body** gives the name, the component and functions of the advisory body as well as defining who are eligible as members, their terms of office and how members are included or accredited.
12. **Sanctions** specify the kinds and extent of penalty for violating provisions of this Convention.
13. **Rules for Amendment** stipulate the rules for amending the Convention.

14. **Accession, Ratification and Denunciation** explain the standard rules and procedures for such incidents.

15. **Relation with other UNESCO Conventions and Treaties** provides that member states in performing their legal obligations under other legal instruments must recognize the duties imposed by this Convention.

16. **Entry into Force** determines when and how the Convention will be effective.

17. **Authoritative Text** specifies the languages in which the text of the Convention will be written and the equal weight they carry.

18. **Transition Clauses**

19. **Schedules** are for anything else not included in the main text but warrant further elaboration.