

**Report to the Sixth General Meeting of the Memory of the World  
Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP)  
Guangzhou 13-15 May 2014**

## **Iranian Memory of the World Committee Activities**

### **Introduction**

In 2006, fourteen years after the establishment of the UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme, Iranian Memory of the World Committee started its activity. Later in this year, the Committee's secretariat was founded at National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) and the Head of the Organization was appointed as the chair of the Committee. Iranian MOW Committee is operating under the auspices of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and attended by heads of important centers of the documentary heritage across the country. Based on its Rules of Procedure, currently, the Committee has 13 members, eight of whom are heads of libraries and archives, and another five members are chosen on the basis of their knowledge and expertise of the field and their ability to contribute to the achievement of the Programme's objectives. The Committee members gather monthly to decide on Committee's activities and how to develop the aims of the Programme in Iran. Since the inception of the Programme, 83 meetings have been held.

### **Assessment Sub-committee at Iranian Memory of the World Committee**

In 2007, Iranian MOW Committee developed its structure through collecting a group of experts within a team to assess nomination forms before their inscription on the national or international Register. In 2012, the Sub-committee extended its members and it was divided into four expert groups enabling the National Committee to play a more effective role for selection of the documentary heritage, completion of the nomination forms, assessment and preservation and conservation guidance. The four sub-committees have already convened 78 sessions since.

### **Iranian Documentary Heritage on the Memory of the World Register**

In 2007, for the first time, two Iranian documentary heritages, *Bayasanqori Shahnameh* from Imperial Library of Golestan Palace and *Rab-i Rashīdi Endowment* from Tabriz Central Library were inscribed on the International Memory of the World Register.

In 2009, *Administrative Documents of Astan-e Quds Razavi in the Safavid Era* from Astan-e Quds Razavi Library, Archives and Museums Organisation was included in the Memory of the World Register.

In 2011, *Al-Tafhim li Awa'il Sana'at al-Tanjim* from Islamic Consultative Assembly Library (ICAL), and a collection of Nezami's *Panj Ganj* from five libraries (Library of Sepahsalar (Mottahari) School, Library of Golestan Palace, National Museum of Iran, Malek National Library and Museum, Central Library and Document Centre of the University of Tehran) were included in the Memory of the World Register.

In June 2013, the *Collection of Selected Maps of Iran in the Qajar Era* from the Center of National Documents and the History of Diplomacy in Iran as well as *Dhakhira-yi Kharazmshahi* from Sepahsalar Library (Shahid Mutahhari School) were inscribed on the Memory of the World Register.

Therefore, seven documentary heritages from Iran have so far been inscribed on the international Memory of the World Register. The Iranian National Committee aims to forward more nominations for entry on the Regional and International Registers along with documentary heritages from other countries in the future. Recently in March 2014, five other items from Iran (three of them are jointly-nominated with Germany, Austria and France) have been proposed to the secretariat and we are hopeful that the positive outcomes will be announced in 2015.

### **Iranian Memory of the World Register**

Promoting the directives of the Memory of the World Programme, the National MOW Register was founded in 2009 at the anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution. Several documentary heritages have been included every year and, so far, 42 items or collections have been inscribed on the National Register. But, for the first time, the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Asia-Pacific Regional Committee will decide on the inscription of four nominated items from Iran on the Regional Register.

### **Memory of the World Workshops**

In order to give more visibility to the Memory of the World Programme and to raise awareness of the issues and assist institutions to respond to those issues, the National Committee has so far organized numerous national, international and local workshops in Iran for librarians, archivists and museum custodians.

- 1- National workshops: two two-day workshops attending 15 and 40 trainees in 2007 and 2008.
- 2- International workshop: a three-day workshop attending 69 Iranian and 9 foreign trainees from Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan and Zimbabwe in 2010.
- 3- Local workshops: five two-day workshops attending 203 trainees from 13 provinces of all around Iran in 2010 and 2011.

### **Information and Communication Activities**

- 1- Designing a logo for Iranian MOW Committee in 2006;
- 2- launching the website of Iranian MOW Committee in Persian in 2006;
- 3- translating in Persian and publishing the book *Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage* in 2008 and 2010;
- 4- transferring the news of the MOW Programme and National Committee activities to media continuously;
- 5- holding the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the World Day for Audio-visual Heritage in 2011 and 2012;
- 6- preparing brochures introducing MOW Programme and Iranian items inscribed on the national and international Registers annually;
- 7- holding exhibitions introducing MOW Programme and its Iranian Heritage; and,

- 8- organizing ceremonies for rewarding certificates of registered heritages in all periods of the registration. The last ceremony was that for rewarding the certificate of registration of the *Collection of Selected Maps of Iran in the Qajar Era*. The certificate was rewarded to the representative of Iran's Foreign Affairs Ministry in a ceremony attended by the UNESCO Director General, Mrs. Bokova, on 26 April 2014 in Tehran.

### **Participating in Memory of the World Meetings**

- 1- Participating in the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of MOWCAP in Macao in 2010;
- 2- taking part in the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of MOWCAP in Bangkok in 2012;
- 3- attending the workshop of Memory of the World in the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of International Council for Archives (ICA) in Brisbane in 2012;
- 4- organizing a sub-regional seminar on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Memory of the World Programme in Tehran in 2012; thanks to the National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO Cluster office in Tehran; representatives from Iran as well as Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan attended the Seminar; and,
- 5- taking part in the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of MOWCAP in Guangzhou, 2014.

### **MOW Programme at the focus point of the Iranian Academics**

Apart from gradually increased public interest in MOW Programme, Iranian university professors and students, especially in library science and information disciplines have begun to be interested in the Memory of the World topics. So far, one graduate and two post-graduate students of library science and information dedicated their theses to the topics related to the Memory of the World Programme.

Taking into account the cultural richness and abundance of documentary heritage of Iran, the National Committee hopes to play a decisive role in the area of MOW Studies as well.

### **Ferdowsi Memory of the World Prize, proposed to UNESCO**

In 2009, the National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed the UNESCO/Ferdowsi Memory of the World Prize to be awarded to individuals and institutions which have carried out a prominent contribution to the preservation and accessibility of Persian and Islamic documentary heritage as a common heritage of humanity. There is hope that the suggestion would be approved and begin its procedure very soon.

### **The Final Note**

Appreciating the organizers of this meeting, on behalf of the Iranian Memory of the World Committee, I would like to invite the Chairman and all members of the Asia-Pacific Regional Committee to hold the 7<sup>th</sup> MOWCAP meeting in Tehran.