

Report by Chairman of the Memory of the World Regional Committee for Asia Pacific

In May 2014, the sixth General Meeting of the Memory of the World Regional Committee for Asia Pacific (hereinafter referred to as MOWCAP) was held in Guangzhou, China. We elected a new Bureau. As the current Chairman of MOWCAP, I would like to report to the Delegates on the situation of MOWCAP on behalf of the Bureau.

I. Background

MOWCAP was established in 1998 as a regional platform for Memory of the World Programme, with a connection to the UNESCO Bangkok Office. As MOWCAP Statutes stipulate, MOWCAP is “composed of UNESCO National MOW Committees in member states in the Asia/Pacific region, represented by their appointed delegates.”

This region is characterized by:

- Political, linguistic and cultural diversity
- Economic disparity: developed and developing countries
- With the world's most populous country (China 1.3 billion) and the least populous country (Niue 2000)
- High working costs. Many Asia-Pacific countries are located on the ocean, and costs of travel and communication are high for some of the island countries.
- With ancient and rich culture, but many countries are very young. With its general colonial history, special problems occur on the repatriation of documentary heritage.
- Many countries are tropical countries, where the documentary heritage is affected by temperature / humidity greatly.
- Archives, libraries and museums often lack adequate funding, facilities and skills.
- With nearly half of the world's population, it accounts for a quarter of UNESCO member states.

II. Organization structure

The new MOWCAP Bureau exists for the term 2014- 2018.

Board members include:

Chairperson: Mr. Li Minghua (China)

Vice-Chairpersons: Ms. Diane Macaskill (New Zealand)

Ms. Vu Thi Minh Huong (Vietnam)

Ms. Fatima Fahimina (Iran)

Mr. Kim Kwibae (Korea)

Secretary General: Ms. Helen Swinnerton

UNESCO Consultant: Ms. Misako Ito

Goodwill Ambassador, Chairman of the Asia/Pacific Register Subcommittee: Mr. Rujaya Abhakorn

Special Advisers: Mr. Ray Edmondson, Mr. Simon Chu, Ms. Sarah Choy

Mr. Richard Engelhardt

III. UNESCO Bangkok

As mentioned earlier, MOWCAP has a connection to the UNESCO Bangkok. At the beginning of 2015, Ms. Misako Ito succeeded to Ms. Rosa Maria Gonzalez Lopez as advisor of communication and information.

As a Cluster Office, UNESCO Bangkok is responsible for the implementation of all UNESCO programmes in the “Mekong” countries. In recent years, UNESCO Bangkok funded MOWCAP Bureau members for part of the travel and accommodation costs, as well as part of the Memory of the World projects.

IV. The Asia-Pacific Memory of the World Register

As of now, the Asia-Pacific region has 32 inscriptions on the regional register from 17 countries.

A new round of nominations for Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register has ended, with a total of 16 nominations from 11 countries.

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The next time of nominations is 2018.

V. The main activities since May 2014

Several National Committees and documentary heritage conservation institutions held a number of seminars on Memory of the World program. We learned that they included:

In May 2014, the "International Seminar on Historical Memory and Urban Development" was held at Shanghai Normal University, China.

In September 2014, the Korean National Committee of UNESCO sponsored in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan a "Memory of the World Workshop for Training in Central Asia".

In March 2015, the "Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop" was held in Suzhou, China; The meeting shared views and experiences of documentary heritage protection in the region, to guide nomination to Memory of the World Register.

In April 2015, a workshop about the MOW organized by the National Archives of Singapore and a meeting of Southeast Asia-Pacific Regional Audiovisual Archives Association was held in Singapore.

VI. The main tasks of MOWCAP to be carried out

1. With the generous help of the Korean National Committee, MOWCAP Secretariat started running in Gwangju Asian Cultural Center in the first half of 2016. On December 9, 2015, I signed in Beijing a related agreement on behalf of MOWCAP with Mr. Bung Sun-gyu, the Director of Gwangju Asian Cultural Center.

2. Discussion of the implementation of "Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of, and Access to Documentary Heritage, in the Digital Era" in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. Discussion of the revision of "Memory of the World General Guidelines" and "Memory of the World Register Companion."

In order to further promote the Memory of the World Programme, at the Abu Dhabi meeting in 2015, the International Advisory Committee decided to revise these two documents. To do this, it was decided that a revision team be formed by Mr. Ray Edmondson, et al. With their efforts, the team has submitted a discussion draft to the International Advisory Committee. We will invite Mr. Edmondson to present and interpret that on the morning of May 19, and solicit MOWCAP Member States to propose amendments.

4. MOWCAP plans to establish a potential program database to find and attract potential sponsors, or ask the Bangkok office for its assistance in applying for UNESCO funding. To this end, MOWCAP intends to design a form, to be sent to the National Committees, to solicit proposals from the National Committees in accordance with their needs.

5. Coordination of MOW, WHC and IHC programs

The Bureau is considering how to take best advantage of and maintain the network database developed by UNESCO Bangkok office, by capturing and comparing the synergies of the three UNESCO heritage programs in the region. Since the three programs tell different parts of a story from different aspects, cooperation will become more meaningful.

The measures discussed by the Bureau include: to collect funding for academic research, and solicit views of Member States on the synergies of the three programs and on the role of documentary heritage.

6. The forthcoming establishment of Macao Memory of the World Knowledge Centre. The center was co-established by the City University and Macau Documentation Information Society, based at City University of Macau. Aiming it at promoting the public awareness and understanding of the MOW Programme in the region, we can then conduct research and education.

VII. MOWCAP Goodwill Ambassador

In December 2004, MOWCAP appointed Dr. Abhakorn to be a "goodwill ambassador." His tasks include meeting members of UNESCO in Asia-Pacific countries not yet participating in MOWCAP to brief them on the role and activities of Memory of the World Programme, and to encourage these countries to establish the National Committees of the Memory of the World Programme.

In 2014, Dr. Abhakorn participated in the workshops in Kyrgyzstan and China at the invitation of the host states. However, due to lack of funding support, the Goodwill Ambassador is

limited in his activities. After careful consideration, the Bureau believes that the goodwill ambassador has his unique role in promoting the MOW program, so MOWCAP decided to retain the position.

VIII. Publicity efforts

1. Publications -- *Memory*

To expand the publicity of Memory of the World Programme, MOWCAP has spent several years editing a coffee table book. The book will be showing the MOW register within the Asia-Pacific region and the Asia Pacific register in the form of pictures and texts. Memory of the World Committees in China and Australia funded the publication of the book. The book currently has been completed in the content layout and design, and the final review of the manuscripts is ongoing.

2. Internet Communication

In October 2015, the new MOWCAP website went into operation. The website address: <http://www.mowcap.org>. On the new site, MOWCAP published a "newsletter" and set up "Facebook." Ms. Diane Macaskill is the editor of the newsletters, which have landed on the site, designed to make more people both inside and outside the Asia-Pacific region understand the Memory of the World Programme and recent MOWCAP activities. In addition, the "Facebook" is the main form of communication of MOWCAP with young people, since the majority of users in our Facebook are below 35 years of age. "Facebook" is in the charge of Ms. Helen, the MOWCAP Secretary-General, fortnightly updated in order to improve our visibility. Currently, the "like" rating of MOWCAP on Facebook is rising.

IX. Acknowledgements

On this occasion, I would like to thank the Viet Nam National Committee for UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture and City Government of Hue, etc. for their time and effort dedicated to the convening of the meeting. Thanks also go to the UNESCO Bangkok who provided finance for this meeting. I would like to thank you for attending the meeting in your busy schedule.