

**Resolutions of the Annual General Meeting
of the International Council on Archives
Curacao 24 November 2006**

The national archivists, the presidents of national professional associations and the elected and professional officers of the International Council on Archives (ICA), meeting in Curacao on the occasion of the 39th International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA),

General Resolutions

1. *Resolution on the Protection of Archivists*

Considering the fundamental role of archivists in collecting and disseminating elements which enable the documentation and elaboration of history and of collective memory,

Considering that the construction of history and collective memory implies the use of sources which are as diversified as possible,

Aware that archive professionals are sometimes subject to political and economic pressures which prevent them from applying ethical principles,

Ask for the revision of the ICA Code of Ethics as a fundamental reference for the guidance of individual archivists,

Seek the development of a strategic tool which will both promote the role of archivist and protect archivists under political or economic pressure,

Call upon the United Nations and other relevant organizations to promote the implementation of the Code of ethics and the new strategic tool.

2. *Resolution on the role of the archivist in the preservation of memory*

Considering the specific skills and expertise of archivists in the preservation of elements enabling society to build its memory

Because through their role in records management and in the areas of appraisal, acquisition, preservation and access to archives, they guarantee their integrity,

Considering the important role archives play in preserving memory and the fragmentation posed by the multiplication of non archival institutions which focus on subject specific memory

Demand that States create or maintain real professional archival services.

3. *Resolution on the protection of archival heritage under threat in cases of armed conflict.*

Profoundly concerned by the pillage and destruction which occurred during recent conflicts,

Recommend

- that governments, which have not already ratified the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property adopted in The Hague in 1954 and its 2nd Protocol of 1999, should do so at the earliest opportunity,

- that the members of ICA Should establish a National Committee for the Blue Shield in their countries in order to protect the cultural heritage in case of armed conflict or natural disaster, if one has not been established.

4. Resolution on the UNESCO Slave Trade Archives project

Ask UNESCO

- To continue its support to countries involved in the first phase of the project
- To extend the project to other countries concerned, taking into account the system of slavery in its totality
- To co-ordinate the network which has already been developed
- To promote the digitisation projects initiated by the participating countries.

Encourage participating countries

- To launch programmes for the description of archives concerning the slave trade
- To promote co-operation among themselves in all areas
- To continue actively the project.

Ask ICA

- to explore actively opportunities for resource mobilization for participating countries to sustain the projects
- to encourage former colonial powers to take measures to preserve colonial records
- to promote closer cooperation among regional branches in sharing resources and experience.

5. Resolution on the archives of colonisation and on the sharing of the archival heritage common to several countries

Considering that the concept of the archives of colonised countries must be brought closer to that of displaced archives

Considering the difficulties of applying the international recommendations on the question of displaced archives and the complexity of the problem

Recognizing the work done by the nine countries of the former French West Africa and the Caribbean in pooling their archival heritage, and noting that other countries of the world have similar needs to share the documents concerning their common heritage,

Propose a plan for multi-lateral co-operation which is intended

- To develop the flow of information concerning sources that document the phenomena of colonisation and decolonisation
- To provide the equipment, training and resources that are necessary
- To improve access to archives kept outside the territories concerned, particularly by the provision of detailed finding aids and sharing of records through copying and dissemination.

Ask UNESCO, organisations and States concerned to encourage and to support financially this plan and all projects intended to facilitate the access to the documents related to the common memory of countries which have the same past.

7. Resolution on international sources

Considering that national States and individual societies are interconnected and this is reflected in the fact that archival institutions hold records relating to other societies

Invite all archival institutions:

- to recognize that there is a moral obligation to overcome financial constraints that inhibit sharing information about and access to the archives and in consequence that they should work together to secure the necessary funding
- to facilitate access to these records in particular by:
 - developing finding aids such as the UNESCO/ICA Guide to the Archives of International Organizations;
 - providing access to these international records;
 - working with archival institutions to provide copies of these records;

Invite UNESCO to support this initiative financially.

8. *Resolution on archives relating to the judiciary, incarceration and intelligence services*

Extremely preoccupied by the menaces that threaten archives relating to the judiciary, incarceration, and intelligence services, and by the misuses of these documents

Considering the fundamental importance of these archives as a constituent element of collective memory, as an instrument for the determination of responsibilities, for reconciliation and the promotion of a universal justice, and as a means of defending individual and collective rights

Ask ICA and UNESCO

- To bring up to date the 1995 study on the archives of security services in the former repressive regimes
- To co-ordinate at the international level a programme to locate, describe and exchange information about archives relating to the judiciary, incarceration and intelligence services.

9. *Resolution on the oral tradition*

Considering the importance of the oral tradition for the safe-keeping of the memory of the world, and referring to the UNESCO Convention on the intangible heritage

Urge UNESCO to support programmes for collecting, preserving and making available the oral heritage

Ask ICA to collaborate with other relevant international organizations to lead strategic thinking in this area and to promote the implementation of good practices.

Resolutions addressed to ICA

1. Resolution on the creation of an International Archives Day

Understanding that the creation of new international days is highly unlikely in the United Nations system

Recommend that

- ICA organize on its own an international archives day the date of which could change from one year to another depending on the international calendar.
- ICA encourage member countries to organize with their own National Archives Days or Weeks.

2. Resolution concerning putting archival documents online

Considering programmes intended to put online archival documents are instrumental in taking archives to the world

Convinced that the sharing of experience acquired during the implementation of these programmes helps in solving the problems encountered and to promote best practices

Propose that ICA should make widely known existing projects or those underway and should support the development of models for presentation and for search functions which facilitate access to archives online

- By establishing an ICA award to recognize projects that make archives available online
- By making known to its members the proposals received for this award
- By facilitating a professional dialogue on the legal and technical issues linked to the presentation of archives online.

3. Resolution on private archives

Noting that private archives and public archives are essential elements in the memory of a society in its totality, and that these archives should therefore be preserved,

Considering archivists have a role to develop and pursue strategies which actively support the creation, capture and preservation of records of private persons and organizations with the aim of building a balanced and comprehensive memory of a whole society.

Ask ICA to promote general awareness about the importance and value of these total archives.

4. Resolution on audio visual heritage

Considering the challenges faced by developing nations in preserving audio visual heritage and concerned by the accelerated loss of such heritage

Call upon ICA to work with relevant partners to develop and implement a sustainable integrated preservation approach for the protection of the world's audio visual heritage.

Votes of Thanks

Thank Sir Shridath Ramphal and Ian Wilson for the quality of their presentations, and all the speakers and participants whose contributions resulted in stimulating professional discussions.

Express their profound gratitude to the Authorities of the Netherlands Antilles, to the Director of the National Archives of the Netherlands Antilles and all her staff and volunteers, for the warmth of their welcome, the generosity of their hospitality and the excellent organization of the meeting.