

# 2019 World Day for Audiovisual Heritage

## "Engage the Past Through Sound and Images "

Our collective histories are often captured on film, video, audio or digital formats, and through these, we engage to learn about the past and to share our own histories with future generations. Increasingly recordings serve as our memories and tell the stories that constitute our cultural heritage. In recognition of the preservation efforts of the thousands of archivists, librarians and caretakers around the world who care for these valuable collections, this year's World Day for Audiovisual Heritage again celebrates their dedication and expertise. Without the knowledge and devotion that is required to preserve, digitize and provide access, large portions of our cultural heritage would disappear to be lost forever.

Yet many conditions (technical, political, social, financial and more) threaten the survival of these audiovisual materials. We see these losses on a daily basis due to human error, as in the case of the most recently revealed decade-old Universal fire which resulted in the loss of thousands of musical masters, a massive portion of American music history. All too often catastrophes occur, as well, through the rapidly growing number of natural disasters, through lack of proper care (due to benign neglect or lack of knowledge and resources), and, of course, through political turmoil and war. Whatever the circumstances that threaten our cultural heritage, these events remind us that in order to protect and to preserve this material for future generations, skills, knowledge and resources are required. Our moving image and sound recordings hold our memories, ideas, and histories.

While many institutions dedicate substantial resources to providing proper archival storage and to continuously reformatting to the latest and greatest digital formats, some situations are less fortunate; nevertheless, the end goal for all of us is to be able to provide these materials to the audiences who will learn from them, engage with them, appreciate them and embrace them. Whether we are able to broadcast these stories through television, radio, the internet or on the big screen in our cinemas, our global efforts to share these sounds and images is paramount.

On 27 October, please join us in celebrating our audio-visual heritage, and assist us to acknowledge the work done every day to preserve our stories so that they will endure for future generations. Also, we encourage you to share these films, audio recordings, television histories and other audiovisual objects with the world to engage our audiences and allow them to remember and discover our past, including its secrets.

