

**Mexico City Declaration
Made by the ICA at the ALA-ICA Annual Conference, Mexico City, November
2017**

Preamble

At the 20th Congress on Archives, held in Seoul South Korea in September 2016, the ICA produced the “Seoul Communique” that outlined the actions that the International Council on Archives should take forward over the next four years. It committed the ICA to act in the following areas:

- Acknowledgement of Records as a unique and irreplaceable Information Resource.
- To Advance Digital Record Keeping Policy Development, including for the enduring preservation and shared accessibility of the digital heritage of humanity.
- Sustainable Financing and Human Resource Development.
- Support of International Organizations’ Policy Initiatives, including UNESCO, UN and the Open Government Partnership.
- Strengthening of International Cooperation.

As we come to the close of the ALA-ICA Annual Conference in Mexico City, November 2017, we now reaffirm our continued commitment to these actions and undertake to maintain our focus on each of the broad objectives. As we did in Seoul in 2016, we recognize the rapid development of technology and the urgency for our community to develop policies and control frameworks that keep pace with the requirements of the information society, and we resolve to support the development of public policy that properly and responsibly promotes the enduring availability and accessibility of public records for the benefit of society.

The theme of the Conference - “Archives, Citizenship and Interculturalism” – has provoked important discussion and exploration of critical issues facing governments, businesses and civil society. More and more, we see that the management of Archives as memory, evidence and documentary heritage has a profound impact upon human rights, access to information, personal data protection and the creative industries.

Declaration

Reaffirming our commitment to the call to action articulated in ICA's Seoul Communique;

Recognizing the role and responsibilities of Archives in the management of information for the public good;

Acknowledging the important contemporary developments in information policy; and

Appreciating the impact that access to information will continue to have on the enjoyment of rights and entitlements by citizens;

We resolve to:

1. Through all appropriate channels, express our concern at the broad concept of "the right to be forgotten". Individuals have the right to privacy, however Governments and Corporate entities have an obligation for accountability, and citizens have the right to access information that is properly and lawfully in the public interest. No society should "forget" its citizens or their deeds, nor should any accountable entity be given license to erase the memory of any of its actions simply to avoid having to account for actions taken. The ability to forget the past is the ability to deny the past; the ability to deny past is the ability to act with impunity, seizing the present and preventing the construction of the future.
2. Take action to preserve humanity's digital documentary heritage. We must embrace and indeed support, the rapid uptake of new technology for the many benefits it will bring, however we must take today's digital information with us into the future. We cannot allow technological obsolescence to deny future generations of the immense value of humanity's digital documentary heritage. In support of this objective, ICA will continue its commitment to the UNESCO Memory of the World PERSIST initiative.
3. Advocate for public records that are in the public domain to remain available and able to be rendered faithfully and in context. We will speak in opposition to censorship or filtering of discovery aids or on-line search engines that remove from view public records that are lawfully in the public interest.
4. Remind that archives are seeds of interculturality, as the interaction between cultures and communication between human groups with different customs and identities, based on a horizontality that prevents one cultural group from being above another, but promoting equality, dignity and harmonic coexistence, based on respect for differences and avoiding the imposition of any form of exploitation.

5. Encourage governments and main actors to identify the regulations in copyright and its close ties with archival activity in their respective countries, allowing joint efforts to legislate the right to access information.
6. Stimulate international cooperation among countries, government security agencies, Interpol, archival institutions and international organizations to prevent and counteract the illicit trafficking of documentary heritage. The success of this cooperation will only be guaranteed if governments are sensitive to the value of the documentary heritage, disseminate it and protect it through a regulatory framework that sanctions illegal practices and encourages the creation of national and transnational networks for the prevention from and the fight against illegal trafficking.
7. Support the incorporation of protocols issued by international organizations to prevent the definitive loss of cultural heritage in case of natural disasters and civil conflicts.