

WHAT ARCHIVISTS HEARD AT WIPO REGIONAL CONFERENCES:

THE GREATEST THREATS TO ARCHIVES

Two conditions—CLIMATE CHANGE and TECHNOLOGICAL OBSOLESCENCE—threaten the survival of our global cultural heritage.

- Most nations lack the resources to retrofit their archives, libraries, and museums to withstand these threats.
- Even the most basic means to preserve archival materials – copying them – is constrained by current copyright law.

Archives cannot deal with these twin threats under the current tangle of intellectual property laws.

- No matter how great or small a nation's resources, copyright law severely constrains them from copying for preservation of materials.
- The inconsistency of copyright exceptions in the laws of WIPO's 192 Member States hinders archives' ability to do preservation copying and to provide access across borders.
- Unless and until WIPO acknowledges the enormity of these threats, the lack of specific exceptions to copyright law will doom preservation efforts—and cultural heritage will vanish in many parts of the world.

Because lives cross borders, archives cross borders.

- Archives contain unique works that should be accessible, no matter where they are located.
- Because the vast majority of archival material was not created for commerce or business, copying it for preservation or cross-border user access does not threaten anyone's income.
- Current licensing systems don't provide a viable resolution of copyright barriers for such non-commercial materials.
- In a world in which the national archives of countries threatened by hurricanes and rising sea levels cannot even afford an archival photocopier, it is unconscionable to pretend that lowering the copyright barriers to preservation copying should depend on fee-based licenses.

It is time for WIPO to provide global copyright policy that addresses real threats to our cultural heritage!