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Message from

**Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO,**

on the occasion of World Day for Audiovisual Heritage

27 October 2013

We are witnessing a historic turning point in the impact of technology: the easier it is to capture images and sounds, edit them and disseminate them worldwide, the harder it is to safeguard these immense data streams.

The growing influence of digital technology in the audiovisual sector is revolutionizing traditional concepts of information sharing, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. It is also redefining our relationship with documents and changing the very nature of preservation work. Digital audiovisual production, in the form of recording or digitization, is often presented as a miracle solution to the safeguarding of certain forms of heritage, but we must ensure that future generations are able to access the recordings that we make. Some of the current commonly used software did not exist 10 or 20 years ago – what will become of it on the scale of history?

In this context, institutions responsible for the safeguarding of our audiovisual heritage – public and private film libraries and archives, national and international institutions – have a dual mission: to pursue the safeguarding of audiovisual heritage, along with the devices that can read them, and to think carefully about the future of digital audiovisual heritage.

Each recording device has something to say about the era and the society in which it was created – slide projectors, cameras, vinyl records and videotapes all tell stories about the lifestyles of their time. Digital technology is no exception. It portrays societies with a compulsive thirst for images and sound, where each public

or private event of history can be documented in a thousand ways, but with what is sometimes a short memory span. Public authorities play an essential role in supporting the development of technologies and their social and cultural impact. World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is an opportunity to reflect and act, in order to bequeath to future generations the means to understand their origins, in the way that we can currently watch a restored version of a Charlie Chaplin film or listen to the recording of workers leaving the factory in the early twentieth century. UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme carries forth this ambition on behalf of the international community and on this Day, I call on all Member States, as well as all of us, as producers and consumers of images and sounds, and the institutions that are responsible for safeguarding them, to join forces to protect and share our common audiovisual wealth.

Irina Bokova