

Open Seminar on the Documentary Heritage Damaged by the Indian Ocean Tsunami  
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## Disaster programs of the IFLA PAC by

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First of all I would like to thank Mr. Takao Kurosawa, the Librarian of the National Diet Library, for having invited me to deliver the keynote address in this seminar. I would also like to congratulate the National Diet Library and the Director of the IFLA PAC Regional Centre for Asia, Mr. Masaki Nasu, for having taken the initiative of organising such a meeting in order to develop partnership in the aftermath of the tsunami that damaged so many libraries in the Indian Ocean area.

Natural disasters, armed conflicts are not new to us. Each year dramatic and unexpected events erase part of our memory by destroying the cultural heritage that has been accumulated in our libraries, archives or museums. Past or recent dramatic events testify the dangers threatening cultural heritage: during the war in Iraq the destruction of an important part of Iraqi heritage was a shock for the entire cultural community. Natural disasters like floods, fires, hurricanes or landslides do not unfortunately lack behind and the tsunami that hit the coasts of several countries in the Indian Ocean made us all aware of the fragility of human life, but also of the world we live in. When everything around you is destroyed it is all your past that disappears, you do not exist any longer and it becomes very difficult to envisage a future. Apart from the economic loss it represents a disaster may also deprive you from your cultural identity.

My concern today is to explain the role and activities of IFLA PAC vis-à-vis disasters and, further on, how institutions like libraries, archives and museums have decided to join their efforts to mitigate the consequences of an armed conflict or a natural disaster. Next I shall tell you what lies behind the concept of the Blue Shield and why it is so important that you should take all preventive measures to mitigate the consequences of such disasters. Finally, I will present the IFLA initiative concerning the Relief and Development Partnership.

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## 1. IFLA PAC and disaster planning activities

### *Glasgow, 2002 - PAC Session on the Blue Shield*

Numerous and recurrent disaster have damaged an important part of the cultural heritage during the past years. Wars and ethnic or religious conflicts have also haphazardly or voluntarily destroyed it, hence the necessity of launching an information campaign so as to safeguard and protect, for as long as possible, our memory in order to pass it on to future generations. Considering that amnesia is not a path towards the future and that libraries, as well as other cultural institutions, are responsible for the care and preservation of documentary heritage, IFLA PAC decided to devote a whole session on the subject during the IFLA General Conference in Glasgow, 2002. The proceedings of the session were published both in English and French in *International Preservation Issues* N° 4 under the title: *A Blue Shield for the Protection of our Endangered Cultural Heritage*. They have been translated into Japanese by the PAC Centre of the National Diet Library. A poster on the Blue Shield was presented during the Poster Session and a leaflet was distributed, which was a way to emphasise the necessity for all actors in the cultural arena to work together for the safeguard of the heritage they conserve and to join the Blue Shield. At the end of the Conference, IFLA Council adopted the following resolution : “Be it resolved that, considering the many risks that threaten the cultural heritage, all libraries responsible for collections of national significance should set up, test, implement and regularly up-date a disaster plan.” At the same time part of Central Europe was under water and many library collections were destroyed by the floods. Fortunately the National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague had had time to secure its collections. Nevertheless the IT equipment in the basement was entirely flooded and all activities had to stop for weeks and the National Library had to remain closed.

### *Berlin, 2003 - war in Iraq*

During the Spring of 2003 war broke out in Iraq bringing pains, wounds and casualties, accompanied by hordes of damages which were all the more appalling since they occurred in Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilisation. At the IFLA Conference in Berlin, August 2003, Jean-Marie Arnoult, the former PAC Director (1992-1994), who participated in the second UNESCO mission sent to Iraq as soon as the conflict was over, reported on the situation in libraries and archives. Jean-Marie Arnoult had just come back from a meeting in Tokyo organised by UNESCO to draw some conclusions from the missions that had been sent to Iraq. Maybe some of you had the opportunity of attending this meeting. At the end of the Conference, IFLA Council adopted a resolution on libraries in Iraq, whose main issues were that :

- Whereas recent UNESCO missions have confirmed destruction and extensive damage in libraries and archives throughout Iraq; and
- Whereas IFLA as an advocate for free access to information and freedom of expression, affirms the central importance of libraries to civil society; and
- Whereas IFLA as an advocate for the preservation of recorded history and cultural heritage has played a key role in making librarians all over the world aware of the significance of these losses to the Iraqi population and to humanity; and
- Whereas discussions at IFLA's 2003 conference have advanced the understanding of the complexities surrounding any efforts to rebuild the library professional in Iraq and the library collections, systems, and buildings throughout the country.

It is resolved that :

- IFLA members should encourage all national governments, that have not already done so, to ratify *UNESCO's 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* and its Protocols particularly the Second Protocol (1999) which will provide for enhanced protection of cultural property and introduce the concept of a cultural war crime.
- IFLA should encourage all countries to take appropriate and strong measures to combat illicit trade in cultural heritage, if they have not already done so.
- IFLA encourages its members to work in a collaborative international effort, looking to the International Committee of the Blue Shield as a co-ordinating body.
- IFLA members should encourage the creation of a national Blue Shield committee in their respective countries.
- IFLA should strengthen its communications program to foster understanding of the conditions facing librarians and libraries in Iraq and to develop a global awareness of the impact of those losses, not only for those who would study the past but also for those who depend on libraries to contribute to the rebuilding of civil society, recognising libraries as an essential part of the social infrastructure.
- IFLA should encourage all countries to commit themselves to contribute to the restoration of the physical, professional and technological infrastructure of Iraq's libraries.
- IFLA should redouble its actions and also make publicly evident its work in assisting the rebuilding of Iraq's libraries; and further, that this resolution be conveyed to each national member association of IFLA.

### ***Berlin Pre-conference on Disaster Preparedness - August 2003***

Although of great importance the Berlin Resolution was only part of the activities of IFLA PAC during the Berlin conference. Sponsored by IFLA Section and Core Activity on Preservation and Conservation a pre-conference "*Preparing for the Worst, Planning for the Best: Protecting our Cultural Heritage from Disaster*" was hosted by the Akademie der Wissenschaften with support from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and the Council on Library and Information Resources. The pre-conference aimed at informing and enabling administrators to effectively prepare for, react and respond to, and recover from disasters. Sixteen speakers from twelve countries dealt with various topics such as: national planning efforts and/or national policies and strategies for handling disasters, disaster planning and response at the institutional level, case studies of institutions that had experienced disasters, models for assessing risk and setting salvage policies, recovery options for various types of collection materials. Ross Shimmon, President of the International Committee of the Blue Shield and IFLA Secretary General, delivered the keynote speech on the importance of disaster planning, presenting the Blue Shield initiative as the cultural Red Cross.

This pre-conference provided an important opportunity for the ninety participants from twenty-five countries to learn from the experience and expertise of countries world wide. Closing discussions indicated that, in spite of the considerable progress made in disaster prevention and planning in recent years, there is a continued need to identify and disseminate information on suitable and effective strategies, and technologies, to develop effective interdisciplinary collaborations and to build awareness of the requirements for successfully protecting and preserving our cultural heritage.

### ***PAC Survey on Disaster Planning in National Libraries***

A world wide *Survey on Disaster Planning in National Libraries* was launched in 2004. The questionnaire was established by IFLA PAC and sent to 177 national libraries. The questionnaire covered such areas as disasters having occurred in the last five and the last ten years, their number and their nature. Institutions were also asked to report whether they were located in an area threatened by natural disasters and what kind could be expected. Buildings were the subject of one section but a much longer part of the questionnaire was devoted to the disaster plan itself. 73 libraries answered (41%) among which 39 (53%) had a disaster plan and 28 (38%) had the intention to have one and only 6 were not interested. Among the risks more frequently quoted stand fire (61%), flood (41%) and earthquakes (32%). The complete results of the survey were presented last year in Buenos Aires during the IFLA conference and are available on the IFLANET <[http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/142e\\_trans-Varlamoff\\_Plassard.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla70/papers/142e_trans-Varlamoff_Plassard.pdf)> or in *International Preservation News* n°34. As could be expected there is a divide between national libraries depending on their geographical location and on the economical situation of their country. What is more surprising and unexpected is that some major libraries do not have a disaster plan. Among the difficulties quoted by the directors, the difficulty in finding a model to copy. This last reason quite surprised me. There are tens if not hundreds of models, some of them are very sophisticated. Nevertheless they are mostly issued from western libraries, written in English and not easily adaptable for libraries with low resources.

### ***PAC Manual on Disaster Planning***

Considering the results of the survey and the discussions which took place during three seminars on disasters organised by PAC in the Caribbean area, I decided to contribute to the already long list of publications dealing with disaster planning. A basic and practical manual on the model of *IFLA Principles on the Care and Handling of Library Material* is being completed. It will present the various risks threatening our documentary heritage and the issues to take into consideration when establishing a disaster plan. It will also bring some practical solutions to mitigate the consequences of a disaster; aimed at librarians but also at archivists, the manual will be published in 2006 in a trilingual version (English, French and Spanish). Offers for translations into Italian, Greek, Arabic, Portuguese were made as soon as the manual was advertised. I am confident that all PAC Regional Centres speaking other languages will be willing to translate it into Japanese, Chinese and Russian.

### ***Workshops on disasters***

Apart from PAC publications and the sessions it organised during IFLA Conferences, I must underline a special effort conducted in the field of disaster planning and in the framework of the Blue Shield. Earthquakes and hurricanes have been a main source of disaster in Latin America and the Caribbean, exactly as it is in Japan. This is why PAC has undertaken a series of workshops on disasters. Three of them were organised with great success and some of the best papers were published in various issues of IPN.

A first workshop was organised in October 2003 in Mexico. With around a hundred participants representing various cultural institutions and actors from the civil society, it concentrated on all issues related to damages caused by earthquakes. A second workshop took place in Trinidad and Tobago (May 2004) and focused on various kind of disasters threatening the Caribbean: earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, etc... And in February 2005 a third workshop focusing in priority on hurricanes took place in Havana and gathered participants from the whole cultural

arena from Cuba. These workshops are meant to gather participants speaking the same language and coming from a restricted and neighbouring area. We thus expect them to weave a network of experts and professionals capable of helping each other in the event of a disaster.

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## 2. Blue Shield and The Hague Convention

You have heard me talk of the Blue Shield and some of you may not be aware of what this stands for. To make a long story short the Blue Shield is for cultural heritage what the Red Cross is for humanitarian purposes.

### *"Lost Memory"*

In 1996, in the framework of its *"Memory of the World"* programme, UNESCO implemented a survey on libraries and archives destroyed in the twentieth century, published under the title of *"Lost Memory"*. The list of the libraries that have been totally or partially destroyed is appalling:

- Between 1939 & 1945: In Czechoslovakia, entire collections were confiscated, dispersed and destroyed, including card catalogues. Total losses were estimated at 2,000 000 volumes.
- In Poland, the National Library in Warsaw was completely destroyed and 700 000 volumes lost. 100 million books have been destroyed in the Soviet Union.
- We all remember the dramatic vision of the flames raging out of the windows of the National Library of Sarajevo thus destroying 90% of the written heritage of the Bosnian Culture.
- More recently we must recall the destruction of the National Library and National Archives of Bagdad, which had been voluntarily set to fire.

### *The 1954 Hague Convention and the 1st protocol*

Conscious of the extent and importance of the destruction that had affected the world's cultural heritage during World War II, UNESCO prepared a Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was adopted in 1954 in The Hague. The State Parties who have signed the Convention agreed:

- to adopt preventive measures to protect the cultural heritage not only during war time (it is too late then) but also during peace time;
- to protect and respect cultural heritage in case of armed conflicts (even when these are not international);
- to create mechanisms to ensure this protection (an international register of cultural items under special protection was created);
- to indicate with a special sign some important buildings;
- to create special units inside the armed forces in charge of the protection of cultural heritage.

The Convention was adopted together with a Protocol which prohibits the export of cultural property from occupied territory and requires return of such property to the state from which it was removed. The Protocol also expressly forbids the appropriation of cultural property as war

reparation. As of October 2005, 114 states are parties to this Convention, 91 of which are also parties to the Protocol.

### ***Second Protocol to The Hague Convention***

Following barbaric acts committed against cultural property in the course of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, a review of the Convention was initiated in 1991 to draw up a new agreement to improve the Convention. A Second Protocol to The Hague Convention was adopted at a diplomatic conference at The Hague in March 1999. This Second Protocol provides greater protection than before and creates a new category of enhanced protection for cultural heritage that is particularly important for humankind, enjoys proper legal protection at national level and is not used for military purposes. It also specifies the sanctions to be imposed for serious violations of cultural property and defines the conditions in which individual criminal responsibility shall apply. Finally, it establishes a twelve-member Intergovernmental Committee to oversee the implementation of the Convention and the Second Protocol. This Protocol officially recognises ICBS as one of the organisations authorised to contribute, in a consultative role, to the work of the Committee. The second Protocol came into force on March 9, 2004, once officially ratified by 20 States Parties. As of October 2005, 33 States are parties to the Second Protocol.

### ***ICBS – International Committee of the Blue Shield***

New kinds of conflicts which have broken out in the recent years (Czechoslovakia, Rwanda, Afghanistan, East Timor) and serious natural disasters (like the floods in Florence - 1966, Poland - 1997, the fires in St Petersburg or Los Angeles; the earthquake in Kobe) have led four non governmental organisations to found the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS).

The Blue Shield created in 1996 is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is the symbol specified in The 1954 Hague Convention for making cultural sites to give them protection from attack in the event of armed conflict.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) covers museums and archives, historic sites and libraries. It brings together the knowledge, experience and international networks of four experts organisations: the International Council of Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). These represent an unrivalled body of expertise to advise and assist in responding to events such as war in Iraq and hurricane damage in the Caribbean. ICBS is international, independent and professional.

### ***ICBS goals***

The main objectives of ICBS are:

- to facilitate international response to threats or emergencies through co-operation between ICBS and national organisations;
- to propose its services in terms of expertise;
- to encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property and particularly to promote standards for risk preparedness;
- to train experts at a national or regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters.

### ***ICBS Charter***

As I said before the vision of the ICBS is that in time the Blue Shield will become for cultural heritage what the Red Cross is for humanitarian protection. ICBS has elaborated its Charter in Strasbourg, April 2000, and decided to respect the following principles:

- joint actions,
- independence,
- neutrality,
- professionalism,
- respect of cultural identity,
- work on non profit basis.

### ***Fields of intervention***

The action of ICBS is threefold and takes place before, during and after a conflict or a disaster. So far the preventive phase has been the best developed within ICBS action plan and implies:

- to assess the risks and raise awareness of threats among governments, professionals and the public;
- to improve risk preparedness;
- to train professional staffs to intervene during and after disasters and to organise workshops;
- to promote the elaboration of disaster plans, especially in national institutions.

ICBS intends to emphasise the fact that preventive measures are useful not only in the event of a disaster but also in the daily management of an institution and that they contribute to the good care of collections.

### ***Blue Shield Network***

The great strength of Blue Shield is that it is cross-sectoral, bringing together professions and institutions across the cultural spectrum. By pooling their expertise, and drawing in military authorities and emergency services, the Blue Shield is a potentially powerful model for managing disaster risks at a national level. Organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) certainly stand as major partners in the implementation of ICBS activities. It is essential that the variety of persons concerned by risk preparedness and response to disasters may also be implied, not only when the disaster strikes but before.

### ***National Committees of the Blue Shield***

Since its creation it has been obvious that ICBS efficiency would be enhanced by the creation of national Blue Shield Committees. It is vital that the international initiative is taken up and supported by local initiatives. Blue Shield Committees have been or are being formed in a number of countries. Belgium was the first to do so, later followed by Australia, Benin, Chile, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Macedonia, Madagascar, Norway, The Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and Ireland, Venezuela. Other committees are under construction in Austria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, South Korea, Hungary, India, Mexico, Namibia, Peru, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Venezuela.

The major strength of Blue Shield is that it can bring together all the professions and institutions involved in cultural heritage and promote co-operation between them, on such matters as risk

preparedness and emergency planning. Even in countries where the threat of armed conflict is limited, this will be a valuable exercise as it can also be used to prepare against natural disasters.

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### **3. IFLA Relief and Development Partnership**

#### ***The Tsunami Disaster***

The disastrous and widespread devastation caused by the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami on 26 December 2004 has shocked the world. In common with people and organisations in many countries, library staff members, libraries and information services and library associations have expressed their wish to help to relieve the suffering and assist with the reconstruction especially of library and information services.

Although the first priority is of course to bring aid for the injured, grieving and displaced, it is also important to secure and stabilise wherever possible any important items (e.g. palm leaf manuscripts, Korans, community and provincial records) for future conservation. Beyond those initial measures, there is a need to reconstruct the fabric, infrastructure and collections, re-establish services, counsel and train staff. In this work lies an opportunity to build more effective services which will strengthen their communities and assist them to extend their capabilities to respond to the twenty-first century information society.

#### ***Challenge and Opportunity***

IFLA has had limited mechanisms to respond effectively to such disasters - principally the advice and training provided through PAC, ALP and other IFLA units and the limited capacity for triage offered through the Blue Shield alliance with ICA, ICOM and ICOMOS with the vital assistance of the Prins Claus Fund. Except for the limited funding available from that fund, there has been no means of providing the substantial funding required to enable assessment, response and reconstruction.

Many IFLA members and their staff, members and colleagues have, of course, donated funds to national and international aid organisations such as the Red Cross. However, there is seldom any opportunity to direct such funding to the needs of libraries and information services and the desire expressed by many information professionals to help rebuild collections and services and to assist their colleagues could not be fulfilled.

#### ***Proposed Partnership***

IFLA therefore thinks desirable to establish mechanisms which can provide some assistance to the library and information sector in the reconstruction following the tsunami and to be better positioned to respond to future disasters and also to contribute to the library development programs undertaken by IFLA and its partners.

The IFLA Relief and Development Partnership (IFLA-RDP) is proposed as a framework for providing this support for those with needs caused by the tsunami and to respond to future needs. This mechanism consists essentially of national IFLA foundations or other resources established

to gather and disburse support for libraries and information services, interacting with IFLA units as facilitators to ensure that funding or other resources will be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. The ALP and PAC Offices will receive project proposals from recognised bodies and refer them to the foundations, offering advice to both parties to endeavour to ensure that the funds will be applied for the greatest possible benefits with the least possible misuse. ALP and PAC, the Regional Offices and other IFLA units will provide technical and other advice. Some funds might be allocated to IFLA units for approved projects such as assessment, training or technical advice but the essential premise is that decision making is located in the Boards of the National IFLA Foundations or other bodies so as to ensure accountability and compliance with relevant national laws.

***Establishment of the National IFLA Foundations***

The use of National IFLA Foundations is highly desirable to provide a high level of accountability to donors and to allow taxation concessions for donations since that must be handled at a national level. IFLA can apply funds to development purposes through ALP or its other units but does not have the capacity to receive, record and track many small donations. The urgent needs of the Tsunami affected countries preclude the establishment of new foundations, a lengthy and involved process in many countries. It is therefore proposed that existing National IFLA Foundations established to assist IFLA congresses should be re-purposed to create National IFLA Foundations for Relief and Development.

The purpose of the National IFLA Foundations for Relief and Development is to provide funds to respond to disasters (starting with the Tsunami disaster), aid reconstruction and, in the longer term, assist the development of library and information services throughout the world.

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As a conclusion, I would like to invite you all to contact your colleagues from the cultural arena in order to form a Japanese Blue Shield Committee, and to invite your Government to ratify and sign The Hague Convention and its two Protocols. I would also like to invite you to create a Japanese IFLA Foundation for Relief and Development Partnership.  
Thank you very much for your attention.