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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the Award Ceremony
for the 2007 UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the Mayor and Cheongju City for hosting the award ceremony for the 2007 UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize. I deeply regret that due to previous commitments I cannot be with you on this occasion.

It nevertheless gives me great pleasure to congratulate this year's laureate, the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Created in 1899, this was the first sound archive in the world and I pay tribute to the foresight of its founders, who in this way ensured that the records of the past would be available today. For more than a century now, the archive has recorded music and languages not only from Austria but also from around the world. It has also provided assistance to archives and trained archivists in many developing countries, thus making a substantial contribution to sustainable development.

In promoting the role of archives in this process, the Phonogrammarchiv reinforces UNESCO's efforts to safeguard the world's documentary heritage in all its forms. In the past the influence of heritage on the different aspects of development was not sufficiently understood, but the Memory of the World Programme has done much to change perceptions of its role. The Programme is an important contribution to UNESCO's work to overcome one of the major obstacles to the development of knowledge societies - the information gap - which perpetuates poverty and inequality. Equitable access to the information preserved through the Memory of the World is one of the foundations for the sharing of knowledge and the empowerment of people.

Metal type, which revolutionized the dissemination of knowledge, was invented in Korea in the early 13th century. Volume 2 of the Jikji is the oldest surviving testimony of this invention and was listed on the Memory of the World Register in 2001. In recognition of this honour and in order to pay tribute to those who have made outstanding contributions to the preservation of the recorded heritage, the UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize was created by the Republic of Korea. This prize is one of the mainstays of UNESCO's action in this field, helping to promote the Programme and change the way the world perceives the documentary heritage.

UNESCO looks forward to your continued support and interest in this domain. Cheongju City, an exceptional cultural city in its own right, funds the Prize and plays a crucial role in the Memory of the World Programme. I and the entire Organization are exceedingly grateful to you for this. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO has also done much to encourage preservation and knowledge access strategies throughout the Asian region, and I wish to thank them for their efforts.

Finally, I once again congratulate the Phonogrammarchiv for its remarkable work, and I wish all participants in the ceremony good health and happiness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Matsuura', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Koïchiro Matsuura