



Geneva 1 July 2008

President
SPA member association

Re : Universal Declaration on Archives

Dear President,

A resolution was passed at the November 2007 ICA Annual General Meeting held in Quebec directing the Section for Professional Associations (SPA) to prepare a Universal Declaration on Archives, modeled on the Quebec Declaration on Archives developed by the Association des archivistes du Québec.

A Working Group was established to undertake this work with the following members – Diane Baillargeon, Denys Chouinard, Abdelkadar Kapadonou, Kim Eberhard, Colleen McEwen and myself.

Attached is a draft prepared by the Working Group and the SPA Steering Committee which we are now forwarding for your information and comment. We would appreciate receiving comments by 1 September sent to Colleen McEwen at tcmcewen@gmail.com.

The document will be considered at the ICA Executive Board at their October meeting and endorsed at the Annual General Meeting held in Malta in 2009.

Yours sincerely,

Didier Grange
President
SPA

Attachment : Draft Universal Declaration on Archives

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ARCHIVES

Archives record decisions, actions and memories. Archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage passed from one generation to another. Archives are managed from creation to preserve their value and meaning. They are authoritative sources of information underpinning accountable and transparent administrative actions. They play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding and contributing to individual and community memory. Open access to archives enriches our knowledge of human society, promotes democracy, protects citizens' rights and enhances the quality of life.

To this effect, we recognize

- **the unique quality** of archives as authentic evidence of administrative, cultural and intellectual activities and as a reflection of the evolution of societies;
- **the vital necessity** of archives for supporting business efficiency, accountability and transparency, for protecting citizens rights, for establishing individual and collective memory, for understanding the past, and for documenting the present to guide future actions;
- **the diversity** of archives in recording every area of human activity;
- **the multiplicity of formats** in which archives are created including paper, electronic, audio visual and other types;
- **the role of archivists** as trained professionals with initial and continuing education, serving their societies by supporting the creation of records and by selecting, maintaining and making these records available for use;
- **the collective responsibility** of all - citizens, public administrators and decision-makers, owners or holders of public or private archives, and archivists and other information specialists - in the management of archives.

We therefore undertake to work together in order that

- appropriate national archival policies and laws are adopted and enforced;
- the management of archives is valued and carried out competently by all bodies, private or public, which create and use archives in the course of conducting their business;
- adequate resources are allocated to support the proper management of archives;
- archives are managed and preserved in ways that ensure their authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability;
- archives are made accessible to everyone, while respecting the pertinent laws and the rights of individuals, creators, owners and users;
- archives are used to contribute to the promotion of responsible citizenship.