

Preserving Audiovisual Archives in Kenya, a case study of the Kenya National Archives

Francis G. Mwangi, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, Nairobi, Kenya

Audio and visual media in many countries across the world form part of the peoples social development and have therefore been preserved for posterity purposes, in this regard, deliberate efforts have been put in place over long periods of time to conserve, preserve and restore them. Consequently, audio-visual material have become an integral part of their contemporary life, culture and history; although this is a tradition in many countries, for Kenya unfortunately most of the audio visual media productions are at risk of disappearing, deteriorating, becoming obsolete or being damaged and lost forever. The fact that preserving these materials is a complex undertaking which often requires specialized guidance, skills, infrastructure and research may largely be responsible for the endangered state of the many audio-visual productions in Kenya. Despite the unfortunate possibility that these materials are at the risk of being completely damaged, Kenya has not witnessed any deliberate effort to enable preservation of its audio visual materials for a long time. This has obviously constrained efforts to research and document work in areas such as music, film and other artistic forms as well as maintenance of a record of the various social historical perspectives and technological developments in the area of audiovisual media. This paper will therefore highlight the efforts and the challenges being made by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service in trying to bring the Audiovisual Archives to a place near where it belongs, and therefore allow future generation to compare their world with our world, at the end of the day, the seminar participants and other colleagues here will chip in to enrich our efforts in our shortcomings and lay the base for a future success of Audiovisual Archives in Kenya. The paper will also discuss the efforts being undertaken to bring back the obsolete machines used in our audiovisual section and the challenges being encountered.