



Presentation of the report of the IFLA Secretary General at the General Assembly of the 79th IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Singapore

Dear members, dear colleagues

The Strategic approach adopted by the IFLA Board in 2010 is now clearly showing benefits for IFLA. This is evident in the achievements through the Key Initiatives, greater participation with external international partners and representative organisations to increase recognition of the role of libraries in society, and a more professional approach to our advocacy and delivery of programmes.

Financial

The Treasurer will report to you on the financial result for 2012. Briefly I can say that we have a surplus result. We are continuing to refine our financial operations so that they meet our changing needs. Securing income is always a challenge in an organisation such as IFLA that depends totally on raising external funds to cover our expenditure. However we are fortunate that the goodwill towards IFLA is strong both from within our sector and from supporters outside our sector and assists us greatly through memberships, donations, grants and in kind support. Without such ongoing support from you we would not be able to achieve what we have.

So what have we achieved?

Key Initiatives

The President has reported on the Trend Report – part of our Key Initiative 1 - and our increased multilingualism activity under Key Initiative 5.

Our Key Initiative 1 is our Digital Content programme.

Our work has continued through the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) towards securing an endorsed international instrument that provides legal certainty for libraries for copyright limitations and exceptions. This is a very long process given that WIPO works on the basis of consensus of its member states, and we will return to WIPO in December for the resumption of discussions. In the meantime we have been working with our members to influence WIPO members about the case for libraries, against some very heavy lobbying from publishers and rightsholders who do not support a treaty and also do not agree to all of our claims. IFLA was also present in Marrakesh in June this year when with great excitement and some surprise WIPO concluded the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or otherwise Print Disabled which will go a long way to addressing the book famine for the world's blind and assisting libraries to deliver improved services to the blind and visually impaired.

We have continued our advocacy on Open Access. We have had an extensive advocacy and representation agenda within the World Summit for the Information Society and the Internet Governance Forum and through this have widened our partnerships beyond the library sector. It is very rewarding for our efforts to now have information society and user organisations coming to us and saying “we like what IFLA is doing and would like to talk about how we can work together”.

We are now increasing our work on some further issues such as data mining; standards for libraries and associations; and e-Lending where we have produced Principles that are proving very useful to our members as they start to deal with this emerging market, and is included in our discussions with our publishing colleagues and we are working with EBLIDA on a campaign for Europe which is expected to be the next growth market after North America.

A new activity is advocacy for libraries within the United Nations preparation of a post-2015 development framework. The IFLA Governing Board has just endorsed our Statement on Libraries and Development; we aim to announce a Declaration on Libraries and Development at our WLIC 2014 in Lyon. IFLA has accreditation at the UN ECOSOC Committee which has charge of the development agenda and through this we are able to participate in discussions, and importantly this has enabled us to be the lead organisation for other civil society organisations with an interest in access to information within the development framework.

One activity that now comes off our KI 1 list and moves to operational is our recently launched IFLA Library for our publishing. This is part of our renewal of our publishing programme and it aims to make more of our content available through Open Access.

All of that is a busy agenda. But there is much more.

Our Key Initiative 2 for International Librarianship Leadership Development has been very successful so far.

Our 12 participants in our International Leaders Programme have survived the demands of the first year and are participating in an extensive programme here. Throughout the past year they have been attached to working groups supporting some of our key initiatives and have assisted through research, conducting surveys, input to policy statements, participating in international forums and meetings and making representations on behalf of IFLA. The Programme councillors tell me that just this first year has made a huge difference for our Leaders Associates and this can be measured also in the activities they have lead through their own initiative in their own countries and regions. This cohort finishes their term at the WLIC 2014. We will of course be evaluating the programme. This is a programme that we would like to continue and the funding is a priority for IFLA and one we prefer to do with our own resources as an IFLA flagship activity.

President Parent mentioned our new grant agreement with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for our Building Strong Library Associations Programme (BSLA). We have been running the BSLA programme for several years and its success has far exceeded our expectations. An evaluation report and details on the programme are available on our website. The training materials for the modules of the BSLA are available to all our members – you don’t have to be on the Programme to make use of these materials. I know some members are using them within their own organisations – not just associations – to assist with strategic planning, developing partnerships and even financial planning.

You can also use the Programme to partner with another association, for example the Swedish Library Association is doing the BSLA with the Kenyan Library Association.

The approach from now until 2016 will be a regional one in Africa, Asia and Oceania and Latin America and the Caribbean to build capacity within and across these regions to raise the voice for libraries, and to make sure that the regional voices are included in our global voice. We are just starting on it and I expect to have much to report to you at our General Assembly in Lyon next year.

Key Initiative 3 is about outreach and I'm sure you have by now a sense of the extensive programme undertaken by the President and through our advocacy representation. Our Key Initiatives intentionally complement each other so that activities interweave. For example activities under KI 1 are built into KIs 2, 3 and 4. The demanding schedule of our Outreach is bringing rewards. We see that through: the profile of libraries being raised in the recipient countries, increased capacity for local advocacy, and new members for IFLA.

Key Initiative 4 is our Cultural heritage disaster reconstruction programme. Unfortunately heritage disaster prevention and reconstruction has become even more of a necessity due to natural disasters and armed conflict situations. Last year we endorsed our Principles of Engagement in library-related activities in times of conflict, crisis or disaster. As some of you may have heard during this Congress, we are now commencing an ambitious 3 year project in close coordination with Blue Shield partners, CDNL and UNESCO to identify cultural heritage in libraries at high risk from conflict or natural disaster and to develop some preventative measures that can assist the protection of this heritage. I will have more to report on that next year.

Professional units

Many of our professional units are participating in, or such as Copyright and other legal matters taking the lead on, activities within our Key Initiatives. They are also busy on projects involving training, development of standards, surveys, publications and community development. There is more information on these in our annual report.

Membership

Very pleasingly, in 2012 we managed to maintain our membership levels with a very slight increase. Also, in 2012 we had new countries in which we did not have any active members in recent years – Bahamas, Burundi, Comoros, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo and Uzbekistan.

Finally, to my thanks

Members, all that IFLA is achieving is a collaborative effort by our members, our Governing Board, our staff, and other organisations that believe in what IFLA is doing and the importance of access to information and knowledge through good library services.

We have been lead over the past 2 years by an outstanding President who really has made libraries a force for change. As is our practice at IFLA, we will be making sure that we continue to find special roles for Ingrid within our ongoing agenda – her expertise, international profile and professionalism is too valuable to let go.

To our outgoing Governing Board – we have worked you hard but your success is evident in what IFLA is now doing and stands for. You have also been a text book example of how an international board can work collaboratively to achieve the best for the organisation as a whole.

The President mentioned retirements – and non-retirements. I would like to acknowledge the work of Marietou Diongue Diop who has recently retired as manager of our French Language Centre for Africa, and Christiane Baryla, director of our PAC Core Activity who will retire at the end of this year. Both have done a remarkable job for IFLA over many years and I know have very much enjoyed the experience of working internationally within our IFLA family.

Our staff extends beyond IFLA HQ to our Regional Offices and Language Centres. Members, you have a very capable and professional team working on your behalf. I ask so much of them and they reward us all the time with excellence and their commitment to go beyond what is asked. I rely on them so much, I trust them implicitly, and it is great fun being the grey haired leader amongst such a dynamic young group.

My thanks to you all for your commitment to IFLA.

President, I present the report of the Secretary General to the Meeting.

Jennefer Nicholson

IFLA Secretary General