



Presentation of the report of IFLA President Sinikka Sipilä at the General Assembly of the 80th IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Lyon, France

Dear IFLA members, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to give you for a few minutes the President's Report of the activities of IFLA during the past year.

You can be sure it has been again a very busy and successful year for IFLA. The agenda of the IFLA Governing Board has been full of critical issues ranging from professional matters to policy and advocacy matters. There are many success stories to tell on the results even if there are also some challenging issues where we need to work hard to get closer to our goals. The Secretary General will soon report to you on the achievements IFLA has made in its Key Initiatives and Strategic Programmes.

Before that I would like to take up some issues that have been on our agenda during the past year. We have strengthened our advocacy and policy work, not only on specific occasions but also in an ongoing process with activities in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Internet Governance Forum (IGF), World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) +10 and United Nations Post 2015 Development framework. In all these areas IFLA has worked collaboratively with relevant organisations to find best ways to reach its goals to put libraries and access to information on the agenda. There has been good progress in most of these areas even if we still face challenges to keep the Treaty Proposal on Exceptions and Limitations for Libraries and Archives on the agenda at WIPO.

One of the success stories and main activities on IFLA's agenda has been the IFLA Trend Report. I am glad to tell you that wherever I have spoken of the report it has been seen as a useful tool for libraries to discuss their future and the challenges and changes they are facing. This was the case for instance in China where I spoke on the Trend report and was introduced to some technological innovations reflecting the evolving information environment. On the other hand I found it very encouraging to meet in Tanzania small entrepreneurs like tailors or women from the Masai tribe selling their traditional

handicrafts. They all were advised by the local librarian in the basic ITC skills and on the benefits of the library services. Therefore, they are able to use the technology to advance their business, as described in one of the IFLA trends.

One of IFLA's Key Initiatives is Outreach for Advocacy and Advancement of the Library and Information Sector: connecting, collaborating, representing strategically. That is an important part of the President's work. I thank all of you who have invited me to speak about IFLA and my theme at your conferences during the past year. I visited countries in Asia, Africa and Europe such as Indonesia, China, Tanzania, Namibia, Norway, Greece, France, Russia and Turkey and met with colleagues from the Americas as well. Everywhere I have met very professional and enthusiastic colleagues, visited interesting libraries and experienced great hospitality showing the best parts of the local culture. I would like to thank also IFLA Governing Board and other members who have represented IFLA around the world.

My theme was also discussed as part of this Key Initiative on Outreach. As I already mentioned in my Opening address my first President's Meeting took place in May this year in Helsinki in Finland. It was entitled Strong Libraries, Strong Societies : Impact of Libraries on Society. We were assured throughout the meeting that libraries play a key role in society as a public space, open to all, providing access to information and knowledge, strengthening democracy and promoting development in all IFLA Regions. We also learnt how the IFLA Trend Report can be used in drafting library policies and strategies or curriculum for library and information studies.

My theme was discussed also in Africa. I am grateful to the organisers of The Namibia Library Symposium in Windhoek that was entitled "Strong Libraries, Strong Societies : the Role of Libraries in Socio-Economic Development". The symposium focussed on issues relevant to African countries in access to information and new locally relevant models for library structures and services. The symposium emphasized the importance of librarians to be proactive in reaching out to the government, policy makers and other strategic partners in addressing the national development goals.

IFLA is not working alone but in partnerships with relevant organisations. For IFLA cooperation with partners is very important, as it increases mutual understanding and helps IFLA and partners to achieve their goals. I was pleased to give speeches at the conferences of UNESCO, the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), the European Bureau of the Library and Information Associations (EBLIDA)

and the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL). It was a great pleasure to meet their members and useful to exchange thoughts of mutual interest and concern.

These few examples show already that it has been a rewarding first year for me as IFLA President. I trust I have been able to contribute to your important work in promoting access to information and strong libraries with quality services. I thank for your continuous support and guidance.

The good results IFLA has achieved have demanded a lot of work from many actors within IFLA. Thank you very much to the active and dedicated members of the Governing Board, sections and committees. The strategic and inspirational leadership of the Secretary General and the sincere commitment of the IFLA staff at the HQ, Strategic Programmes, Regional Offices and Language Centres have been critical to promoting IFLA's values and goals. It has been a great pleasure to work with all of you in the past year.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank also all the IFLA members for your support to our Federation. IFLA is strong through its members and their activities! I also once more would like to commend the National Committee for a wonderful conference in Lyon organised with a genuine French style and charm. What is always required to make a congress like this a success are the volunteers who with a smile on their face are ready to help you and make you feel comfortable. Merci beaucoup! It has been a great week for all of us and we go back home enriched with many new ideas and experiences. It has been a confluence for knowledge, friendship and the profession promoting strong libraries and strong societies.

Thank you! Merci!

Sinikka Sipilä

IFLA President 2013-2015