

<b>International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)</b>	
Document nr	<b>RC 23-03-2.1</b>
Agenda Item	<b>2.1</b>
Subject	Minutes, Regional Council Meeting, 9-10 December 2022
From	Nthabiseng Kotsokoane, Chair
Purpose	Adoption of Agenda
Date	9 March 2023
Note	Minutes were approved on 9 March 2023
Recommendations	Approve the minutes

## **MINUTES**

**The seventh meeting of the Regional Council was held  
on Friday 9 December – Saturday 10 December 2022, in the Hague, The Netherlands**

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

#### **Present:**

- Regional Council Members: Nthabiseng Kotsokoane (Chair), Winston Roberts (Asia-Oceania), Imad Bashir (MENA), Julius Jefferson (North America), Alejandro Santa (LAC), Te Paea Paringatai (Professional Council Chair).
- Others: Barbara Lison (IFLA President), Vicki McDonald (President-Elect), Helen Mandl (IFLA HQ), Stephen Wyber (IFLA HQ)
- Observers: Isela Mo Amavet, Lindi Nhlapo

#### **Apologies:**

- Regional Council Members: Winston Roberts (Asia-Oceania), Stuart Hamilton (Europe), Sarah Kaddu (Sub-Saharan Africa)

The Chair welcomed participants.

The IFLA President addressed the meeting, highlighting the meetings of the Governing Board over the previous days, and efforts to address the challenges IFLA had faced over the year, highlighting in particular the process of hiring a new Secretary General. She also explained the settlement agreement with the previous Secretary General, and noted plans to make clearer how the Governing Board was responding to issues raised in letters from Members.

The Chair of the MENA RDC asked about whether the IFLA SG was automatically the SIGL SG. This was not the case, but there was an effort to clarify the relationship between IFLA and SIGL. SIGL was set up independently, and had the mission to support the Global Library Field as a whole, but currently did indeed intend to focus support on IFLA, and the SIGL Board members knew IFLA well. The key question was around how to ensure that money could support the field, without losing large parts unnecessarily to tax - 2023 would likely be a transition year.

The Chair of the LAC RDC noted the importance of being responsible in these discussions and setting aside personal interests. It was welcome to have clarification around the relationship with SIGL, and for IFLA itself to look at how to raise money and safeguard IFLA's reputation.

The Chair of the NA RDC thanked the President for clarifications, and noted the importance of providing accurate information. Leaving things out or being inconsistent would cause issues. We need a communications plan, based around the GB talking to the regions, as a basis for trust.

The President underlined the situation with SIGL, with the grant given by the Gates Foundation (around 30MUSD). It was vital to think about how this could have maximum impact. Fortunately, the money was likely to last longer than anticipated, but this still required a way of working effectively and productively. She thanked Helen Mandl for taking on the role of Acting Secretary General, noting that this would involve extended duties into the middle of 2023, even once the new SG is in place. She also thanked other staff members who had taken on additional roles to fill in. She recognised the importance of healing and communicating fully and effectively, and noted that efforts were underway here.

The Vice-Chair of the SSA RDC thanked the President for the clarity, but asked then that the President would bring the same message to Committee members. The President agreed to do this.

The NA RDC Chair underlined the importance of communication to the membership as a whole, and to have a strategy. The President confirmed her readiness to go region by region.

The PC Chair introduced herself, underlining her desire better to coordinate and cooperate in the approaches taken by the PC and RC. For the moment, there was no prescribed way of working, and so she was keen to listen, look for points of convergence, and find alignments.

The President-elect underlined how keen she was to meet with the RC and see what it was looking to achieve, especially as a new structure.

The Chair closed the introductions by underlining the goal of looking back at where things stand now, and how to make things work better.

## **2. Agreement of Agenda, and Approval of Minutes**

The chair ran through the goals for the meeting, as presented on the slides, emphasising work within regions, and between them, how to build up relations with funders and supporters. Encouraging collaborations was a key step here:

- To build a stronger shared sense of what the role and unique value of IFLA's Regional Council and Regional Structures is, and how we can go about delivering it
- To optimise engagement between IFLA's regional and professional structures
- To define plans to make best use of the remaining term of this Regional Council, as well as to offer the next Council as much help as possible as they start
- To define principles and actions that can help build better connected regional library fields, internally (i.e. between libraries and associations) and externally (with funders, stakeholders and others)

The PC Chair expressed a desire to see a clearer remit for the RC on the website, as well as stronger ideas on the impact the RC was looking to achieve, and how the PC could support. Opportunities could come around WLIC and regional events which might bring people together who otherwise wouldn't meet, and reach into a wider range of countries.

The NA RDC Chair noted that this topic had been under exploration, but that it was also important not just to talk, but also to advance work in regions. There was more potential to ensure that professional and regional units working together could bring benefits.

The PC Chair suggested a summary of activities, as well as having fewer goals.

The RC Chair noted the value of talking to raise awareness, especially on Officers' Basecamp.

The MENA RDC Chair cautioned that tools should be chosen according to needs in a region - IFLA's goal should be to find the right ways to get to everyone.

The agenda was agreed.

*Minutes of the October Regional Council Meeting*

RC 22-12-3.1

No comments were raised about the minutes of the previous meeting.

Action points from last time were reported on. No questions on this

### **3. Workshop: Defining a Mission for IFLA's Regional Structures, and Ensuring a Strong Volunteering Experience**

The workshop was held informally. However, key ideas emerging from it included, as (potential) challenges to overcome:

- That we aren't visible or accessible enough for librarians and associations on the ground, or that they don't feel a sense of belonging
- That we aren't seeing opportunities to connect people
- That we aren't realising our potential to support library field development
- That we aren't building partnership with external stakeholders
- that we aren't providing a way to address regional priorities
- That we aren't explaining why international relations matter
- That we aren't providing pathways for future leaders (or listening to them)

Actions taken by IFLA's regional structures should look to address these issues.

Key aspects of a mission statement for IFLA's regional structures could therefore include:

- Working to make sure that global issues resonate nationally, as well as to allow for national representation on the global stage - i.e. to connect the 'foot soldiers' with governance at higher levels
- To provide a path to global exposure, and in particular to identify interlocutors at the regional level
- To combat the risk of isolation, and to bring regions together
- To enable and sub-regional organisation and collaboration
- To respond to the fact that there were often more common challenges at the regional than at the global level, as well as to celebrate national and regional diversity

Key outputs of this work could include:

- A well-populated Library Map of the World
- Stronger support for associations

- Clearer communication across the LIS field
- Mentorship programmes within regions
- Stronger reflexes in favour of regional cooperation
- International relations being elevated in national planning and practice
- Stronger recruitment and membership of IFLA Professional Units and IFLA in general
- Improved laws and mentions of libraries in Voluntary National Reviews
- New partnerships with other stakeholders
- Stronger IFLA presence in national conferences

Overall, therefore, key roles for the regional structures overall were as:

- Nodes: structures allowing people to come together to do things that would not be possible at other levels
- Bridges: connecting members with IFLA governance, but also connecting libraries with external stakeholders

#### **4. Optimising engagement between IFLA’s Regional and Professional structures**

##### **4.1 Overview of the Professional Council and how it structures its work**

##### **4.2 Improving ongoing communications**

##### **4.3 Following up on the joint PC-RC session on regional engagement in elections**

*Report on Regional Diversity in IFLA Units* **RC 22-12-4.3.1**

*Note of the joint PC-RC session on 25 November* **RC 22-12-4.3.2**

These topics were not discussed explicitly, but ongoing engagement with the PC will benefit from the participation of the chair of each Council in the other’s meetings. Questions around communication and outreach are covered by the surveys previously mentioned.

#### **4.4 WLIC Update**

The Chair provided an update on progress on planning for the Conference, which would be hybrid, including the business meetings beforehand. Second business meetings could be organised informally in person, and more formally online.

She noted the importance of thinking about topics, and satellites, and mentioned early thinking about hubs. Further information would be forthcoming.

#### **5. Regional Council Self-Evaluation**

##### **5.1 Working practices, building on the consolidated results of the questionnaire filled in by RDC Chairs**

*Summary of survey results* **RC 22-12-5.1.1**

IFLA HQ presented the paper shared with the Committee, which highlighted both commonalities and differences in approaches to meeting organisation. For example attendance rates were similar across committees, but some met much more frequently than others. Regular meetings seemed to be a preference, together with simple ways of recording action points and ensuring delivery.

The Council noted the report, and agreed that the report could be turned into a checklist, and that further similar studies could look at engagement of emerging leaders, communications, and use of sub-groups to carry out work.

## **5.2 Revising work completed, and setting goals for the next nine months**

*Overview of RDC Action Plans*

**RC 22-12-5.2**

*Regional Council Action Plan*

**GB 21-12-3.10.2**

There was not enough time to address this item specifically.

## **5.3 Communicating with regions**

There was not enough time to address this item specifically. However, the agreement to focus on communications as another area of focus for survey work provides a basis for taking this work forwards.

# **6. Exchange with Regional Offices/Centre for Arabic Speaking Libraries**

## **6.1 Welcome and Introductions**

In addition to those present at the Regional Council meeting on the previous day, also present at this meeting were:

Lin Li Soh (Asia-Oceania Regional Office), Dina Youssef (Centre for Arabic-Speaking Libraries).

The Regional Offices and Centre for Arabic Speaking Libraries (CASL) (collectively, the ROs) introduced their background and work.

CASL has started as a translation centre, but had taken on new roles, especially through the BSLA programme and International Advocacy Programme. They to organise regional workshops and outreach too.

The African RO has served as a clearing house for information, the holder of the purse-strings in the region for IFLA projects, leading on monitoring and reporting on projects, promoting IFLA at other conferences, some support for young leaders, and helping to bring AfLIA into being.

The AO RO worked to liaise and connect librarians, including through newsletters and their own mailing list, participating in library conferences, holding series of events (Leaders' Conversations), and some work with UN national offices.

The LAC RO also did translations, but then started to help with logistics, promoting membership and advocacy. They organised important events, and worked with the Division. It was noted that their translation work along was worth around 50 000USD, for free.

It was noted that there was some engagement with sections, at least in LAC, but there was potential for more, including with PAC Centres.

## **6.2 Discussion of the problem and mission statements**

## **6.3 Defining what we need to ensure better connected regional library fields, internally and externally**

The Chair presented the highlights of the first day, sharing key areas of focus for RC work - notably being a node within IFLA, a bridge to the outside world (in particular to the IGF, UNESCO and beyond), and as a driver of advocacy. A key sentiment from the day was the need to improve communications.

The discussion then focused on the respective roles and potential of RDCs and ROs, with the following points raised:

- The ROs often brought deep, long-standing experience and networks that could be invaluable both in shaping RDC action plans, and in implementing them. This contribution should not be underestimated, and the ROs involved therefore in action planning.
- The RDCs arguably had a strong potential to be representatives of IFLA in many ways, as well as setting more strategic directions, whereas the ROs may play a more 'operational' role alongside IFLA HQ.
- It was worth both ROs and RDCs being involved in regular check-ins with other regional associations.
- To some extent, the scope of what ROs could do would be defined by their own resources - it was unlikely that every RO could operate in the precise same way. Similarly, missions would work differently from region to region, as a result of diversity. Nonetheless, it would be important to set out a sense of different roles at a high level.
- Activities that could be carried out by either of the two (or both) could include advocacy, work around the SDGs (in particular, engagement around Voluntary National Reviews), needs analysis, communication, training programmes, wider capacity-building, outreach to younger people, building the capacity of library fields in general, fundraising and communication.

## **7. Any other business**

**Oral Report**

There was no other business raised.