

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)	
Document nr	RC 22-02-1.1
Agenda Item	1.1
Subject	Minutes of the Regional Council meeting, 9 February 2022
From	Nthabiseng Kotsokoane, Chair, Regional Council
Purpose	Adoption of Agenda
Date	4 May 2022
Note	Minutes were approved on 4 May 2022
Recommendations	Approve the minutes

MINUTES

The third meeting of the Regional Council held on Wednesday 9 February 2022 from 20.00 – 21.30 CET by teleconference call via Zoom

Present:

Members: Nthabiseng Kotsokoane, Regional Council Chair; Alejandro Lorenzo César Santa, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Division Committee Chair; Imad Bachir, Middle East and North Africa Regional Division Committee Chair; Julius C. Jefferson Jr., North America Regional Division Committee Chair; Sarah Kaddu, Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Division Committee Chair; Stuart Hamilton, Europe Regional Division Committee Chair; Winston Roberts, Asia-Oceania Regional Division Committee Chair

Observer: Barbara Lison, IFLA President, Jan Richards, IFLA PC Deputy Chair and PC Liaison.

GB Members and Staff: Gerald Leitner, IFLA Secretary General; Stephen Wyber, Director, IFLA Policy and Advocacy; Despina Gerasimidou, IFLA Strategic Development Officer

Welcome and apologies

The Regional Council Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all. There were no apologies, all members of the Regional Council were present and therefore the meeting of the Regional Council could take valid resolutions in respect of proposals set out by a majority of the votes cast. IFLA President, Barbara Lison expressed her eagerness to see how the RDCs are working and being developed, as this is a new structure for IFLA. She also mentioned that the GB members have seen the RDC reports and their plannings and thanked the chairs for their engagement and their commitment.

1. General business

1.1 Adoption of agenda

RC 22-02-1.1

The agenda was adopted.

1.2 Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting

RC 22-02-1.2

Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

1.3 Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

1.4 Decisions taken since previous meeting

Changes in the action plans have been made based on the comments received and the action plans have been approved in writing. It has been decided that the action plans will be revisited in a mid-term review before WLIC. No other decisions have been made since the previous meeting.

1.5 Report on Professional Council Activities

Oral Report

The Chair, as liaison to the Professional Council, provided a reminder about the paper on potential collaborations with Professional Units and how this should be done, based on the guidelines described in this paper.

The RC Chair and the PC Deputy Chair and PC Liaison explained this process, as it is described in the [paper](#). The main rationale is that the Division Chairs are delighted for the Professional Units to collaborate with the RDCs, and the process would be that the first contact, in the beginning of the collaboration process, should be made with the Unit directly, but copying the Division Chair. The same would work vice-versa, since it is a two-way process. The PC Deputy Chair and PC Liaison mentioned that the purpose of this is so that everybody knows what is happening and what is being planned. The RC Chair added that this is not meant to control but just to guide.

Stuart asked if the action plans can be shared with the Professional Units and the RC Chair answered positively, since they are approved now.

Winston mentioned that this is not only about the PUs, but also about the Advisory Committees, e.g., the Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee approached the AO RDC. To avoid confusion and duplication it needs to be clear who is collaborating with whom. Nthabi mentioned that a work report from each RDC Chair back to the RC would be useful.

2. IFLA Outreach and Membership in the Regions

2.1 Overview of current membership, and questions for discussion RC 22-02-2.1

2.1.1 Regional Factsheets on IFLA Membership RC 22-02-2.1.1

2.2.2 Data on IFLA Membership RC 22-02-2.1.2

IFLA SG Gerald Leitner presented the papers about IFLA membership in different regions in the world. He mentioned that the goal is to have separate meetings with each RDC to identify potential future IFLA Members in their regions and define targets and figures for the number of members to engage with and define evaluation processes. Based on the outcomes from the GB, IFLA's plans focus on strong membership and these discussions will cover the question of how we can best communicate about IFLA's work to libraries around the world, what aspects of IFLA membership are most important, and what steps could be taken to attract more Members. For that purpose, IFLA will reach out to the Chairs to discuss ideas for strong communication for membership, the plans and membership campaigns. Gerald Leitner stressed out the two aspects: 1) strong membership globally is needed if we need to advocate; 2) the good news is that IFLA has more members than before, but since the membership structure changed, this has had an impact on the financial situation of IFLA, as we lost many institutional members and we gained many individual members. So, although we have an increase in membership, there is a decrease in finances. Therefore, there needs to be a focus on attracting the main key public libraries, universities, and other institutions to become IFLA members and that we attract players from the countries that we have no members -out of the 193 countries we

have members from 150 countries. Gerald Leitner asked each RDC Chair to discuss with their committees about ideas how to engage more members, what is the right wording, what would be attractive to them etc. and send ideas back to the HQ and that each session-membership discussion will be the starting point of this membership campaign.

A brainstorming session started around membership matters. **Stuart** highlighted that the EU RDC decided to use IFLA products, such as the IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto as a means of attracting and engaging people, thus delivering the message that these things are what IFLA does and are helpful for the global library community. **Alejandro** mentioned advocacy examples and the situation with Ecuador. Extensive work has been done by us and we did a big communication campaign about the benefits of being members of IFLA. <https://www.ifla.org/news/protecting-library-education-in-ecuador/>. **Imad** stressed out that many people, even knowledge science colleagues, know about IFLA only when the WLIC takes place. Therefore, whatever the MENA RDC will do is going to be progress. Soon, IFLA MENA RDC is going to have its first public meeting with the presidents of the Arab library associations and Arab authorities in this field. One of the objectives is to discuss how to make IFLA more popular among the Arab library community, as they don't know what IFLA can offer. Important issues to keep in mind, though is the difficulty that some countries face in MENA due to the fact that they are poor or even at war. Therefore, it would be good to know if there is a special price for them or paying in installments and not one-off. **Gerald Leitner** mentioned that the membership fee is based on income, therefore smaller associations pay less, and richer associations pay more for IFLA membership. In addition, there may well be a sponsor in the MENA region who wants to sponsor library associations so that they become IFLA members. **Julius** highlighted that the NA RDC is thinking about awareness and a campaign to build membership, something universal that we could create and all use as a global plan, global membership campaign to show what IFLA does. Julius also mentioned that ALA goes to Sharjah this year and that he will seek collaboration with IFLA to show what IFLA does in that region of the world. **Sarah** mentioned that the situations in MENA and NA are not so different to SSA. First of all, we need to identify the contacts, so many countries that are not familiar with IFLA and they don't know the benefits of being a member of IFLA and they think IFLA is for some other people and not them. The institutions they belong don't think that this is a place to belong. We are happy to work on that and identify the champions who will really help us with us and who will report back to us constantly. We have so many library institutions with which we are familiar with, and we have contacts. **Winston** thanked IFLA HQ staff for providing these very useful data sets. Nothing has changed in the past 30 years in AO region. We have some of the largest and smallest countries in the world, some disappearing under the sea. While the largest countries, such as China, have been hit by Covid and are cancelling their conferences, the smallest countries would be eager to join physically WLIC for example but it's very hard for them. Therefore, we have to develop a tailored approach for each country and each culture, e.g., create personal contacts, communication, telephone etc. with specific people. He mentioned that he would immediately distribute the papers to his committee and ask them what they suggest from their knowledge in the country/region? What shall be done for countries that have not heard of IFLA or have heard of IFLA and need to overcome the psychological barriers or other misunderstandings.

Nthabi suggested to include this update on membership in each RDC report every quarter. Gerald again highlighted that there will be a discussion with each RDC to tailor this campaign for each region. "We have a global community that can really build librarians up. We are a platform that no one other association can offer. Products are prepared by many other associations as well. But, our unique thing is that this is a global community. Additionally, of course our products are offered for free. But I would encourage to find the right wordings for your region, this could be an exercise for your committee."

Winston mentioned the need for general communications through general media, for example to get good news stories published on BBC, Aljazeera, CNN. “We are full of negative news. Let’s raise the tone and raise the stake in fact, something like the UN agencies do good for the humanity”.

Nthabi encouraged the Chairs to have discussions with their committees first to get ideas and then have the discussion with Gerald and HQ.

3. Planning on the SDGs

3.1 Forward look on the SDGs in 2022

RC 22-02-3.1

Stephen Wyber described the paper that set out the current plans for 2022 on the Sustainable Development Goals, including proposed themes for engagement around the High-Level Political Forum and preparation meetings. It also provided a consolidated roadmap of actions around the SDGs, combining the RC and RDC Action Plans.

One area of focus is the High Level Political Forum in July and the Regional SDG Fora: 1) a Side event by the SSA RDC has been accepted and we are working on this, 2) AO has put a bid, 3) EU is doing the same. The MENA and LAC fora are slightly more informally organized, so what is normally being done there is to reach out to libraries in case they want to do a side event.

Another area of focus is the Voluntary National Reviews that we continue to support libraries in countries that are carrying these out, eg. Alejandro in Argentina, Sri Lanka, Botswana. Support could come in many ways, one could be our eight-step guide on engaging in VNRs: <https://www.ifla.org/libraries-in-voluntary-national-reviews/>. We are working on a webinar to draw on good example e.g. from Denmark, Zimbabwe, Spain.

Finally, concerning the High-Level Political Forum itself, and the messages we put forward through our participation in it and preparation for it, we'd like to do better in mobilising our field so we are writing to governments, to the responsible people to get them thinking about libraries. We had a good example recently from Latvia –there is an ambassador in NYC interested in digital literacy and so this means that we want to get in touch with people who are interested in libraries and we want to do this in a more systematic way in the coming months.

Alejandro mentioned that he is at the RC and RDCs disposal, if anyone would like to discuss how they are doing in the LAC region, as for example they had had a paper in 2019 signed by 14 ministers and next week they plan to meet with the Minister of the Executive to disseminate in Argentina the work we do in libraries in the country. He expressed his willingness to share his expertise and experience in organizing meetings with authorities. Winston endorsed that and added that it would be great to have a one-on-one approach, creating and distributing a check-list, a 1-page document with good approach practices on how to do it.

4. World Library and Information Congress

4.1 Regional sessions at WLIC

RC 22-02-4.1

The RC Chair described the paper set out information about the options open to Regional Division

Committees at the World Library and Information Congress 2022. Each RDC is encouraged to advertise WLIC in their region. . Time has been allocated to each RDC for:

1. 1 Open session per RDC
2. 1 Business meeting of the RDC

In addition, it is planned to hold one business meeting of the Regional Council, and there is the possibility of course to hold further RDC business meetings in the weeks after WLIC. RDCs and their members could also apply for poster sessions and similar.

It was mentioned that the business meetings will take place at the same for all RDCs, but this will not happen for the open sessions. The RC Chair encouraged RDC Chairs to organize a social networking event, especially if they don't have so many people physically. The Congress was also a good opportunity to ensure a much stronger regional feel to the programme. RDCs could therefore, in their sessions, focus on their regions; stress regional issues; have papers from people from your region.

Jan, the PC Deputy Chair and PC Liaison talked about the posters session and the need to have a regional diversity in them. It would be wonderful to have posters from many and diverse countries. There is a hope to make the posters available online as well, so to engage people who will not physically be able to come. The more international we make it, the more we make it clear that IFLA is a global, worldwide organization. Jan encouraged the RDC Chairs to encourage their members to submit posters when the call is going to be out. The idea is that then they will go to the IFLA repository and then this would be a lasting resource for people to access.

There is a plan to have caucuses this year, but not regional ones, because now we have the RDCs and their open sessions. However, there will probably be language and country caucuses. Stuart asked for an overview of these caucuses and Gerald confirmed that this will be given to Stuart. Winston mentioned that to some extent there is an overlap between the language caucuses and the regions and that maybe it is time to stress out the regional cohesion instead of the language cohesion.

5. Updates from RDC Chairs

Each RDC Chair provided a short overview report on their last activities. **Julius:** the NA RDC had held its last meeting on 24 Jan. This covered discussion around WLIC; posters; regularly scheduled meetings; we consider our plan a living document and looking forward to collaborating. **Stuart:** regular schedule meeting every first Tuesday of every month; all WGs have met at least once; emails going back and forth; there is a lot of work and enthusiasm, but over time we will streamline. **Imad:** the RDC meets every first Tuesday of the month ; upcoming event: "IFLA MENA Regional Division Committee - Who, What, How"; I will pass the membership data sets to the colleagues. **Sarah:** monthly meetings; working for the 25 Feb. side event in African IGF. Workshops before 25 Feb. for librarians in Rwanda for advocacy, VNR, raising awareness about IFLA, professional development and international networking. After the meeting, a follow-up meeting will take place to establish support from the Rwandan library association. Identify champions to express interest in taking initiatives. **Alejandro:** Next meeting will take place on 22nd Feb. We are working on a communication plan. Identification of institutions close to UNESCO, such as CERLALC. We plan to meet in person in April. We have done extensive work for Ecuador. Big communication campaign of the benefits of being members of IFLA. <https://www.ifla.org/news/protecting-library-education-in-ecuador/>. **Winston:** In AO things run slow in January. Next business meeting next week and the message will be "harder and faster and speed up". Travel restrictions with covid are still strict. It is still not possible to get out and meet people and planning is difficult. He shared his concerns of having even the half committee joining the conference in person, due to no-travel policies, very high costs of air tickets

and of travel insurances, but he will keep advocating for that. He suggested to have joint meetings in case there are just a few people joining from his region, so that for example the AO RDC members observe the SSA RDC meeting to get other views and exchange experiences, rather than have a meeting with just a couple or a few members.

The RC Chair asked the RDC Chairs to make a quick poll how many people from each RDC are expected to come to Dublin.

3. Any other business

The IFLA SG encouraged the RDC Chairs to use the IFLA tools and feed in the IFLA newsletter's Regional Section with stories. Ideally, IFLA HQ would like to have two regional stories in every issue that is going to be published monthly. This would mean that every region is asked to submit one interesting and inspiring story per quarter, so 4 stories per year per RDC.

There will be training materials, webinars and tutorials around: i) LMW, ii) how to run Zoom webinars and iii) general communications. The RDC Chairs were also asked to provide short description texts to describe the work of their Action Plans.

We are keen to identify communication leads with each RDC, depending on availability and capacity to give the minimum rights. For now, IFLA HQ will be doing this work. If there is enthusiasm and capacity, we could work on providing rights and the proper training for access to the website, like it happens with the Professional Units. Regarding social media, this should only be launched if there is capacity to maintain it. If there are people willing to put the effort in doing this well, this is welcome. Gerald highlighted that the goal is to make the RDCs autonomous and enable RDC teams to do things on their own.

Winston expressed his concerns about the Regional Newsletter going out by the Regional Office – Singapore: which one has priority, IFLA's newsletter or Regional Newsletter and could stories be repeated? Gerald answered that there is no concern, the Regional Newsletter has more regional stories than IFLA's newsletter which could include selected four of those. Winston also mentioned that the RO plans to profile all RDC members in the Regional Newsletter and asked what authority does the RDC have to ask the Regional Office to publish specific things on the Regional Newsletter? Does the RO have exclusive editorial control or does the RDC have a control over that? Gerald Leitner answered that this needs to be discussed with the RO.