

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)	
Document nr	RC 23-12-2
Agenda Item	2
Subject	Minutes, Regional Council Meeting, 14 November 2023
From	Alejandro Santa, Chair
Purpose	Agree on the minutes
Date	7 December 2023
Note	
Recommendations	That the Regional Council approves the minutes

MINUTES

**The third meeting of the 2023-2025 IFLA Regional Council
was held on Tuesday 14 November, online, 11:00-12:30 UTC**

1. Welcome, apologies and agreement of agenda

RC 23-11-1

Regional Council: Alejandro Santa (RC Chair), Jeannette Lebron (LAC RDC Chair), Ertugrul Cimen (Europe RDC Chair, remote), Ayanda Lebele (Sub-Saharan Africa RDC Chair), Saif Al-Jabri (MENA RDC Chair), Lin Li Soh (Asia-Oceania RDC Chair), Diane Koen (North America RDC Chair), Te Paea Paringatai (Professional Council Chair)

Others: Vicki McDonald (IFLA President -joined at 11.18 UTC), Stephen Wyber (IFLA HQ), Despina Gerasimidou (IFLA HQ, remote), Maria Florencia Tebano (Interpreter), Isela Mo Amavet (IFLA LAC Regional Office), Michelle Lau (AO Regional Office), Ian Loh (National Library Board, Singapore)

2. Agreement on the minutes of the previous meeting

RC 23-11-2

The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Welcome by the Chair, updates from Governing Board, Professional Council, Headquarters

Oral report

Alejandro Santa (RC Chair) welcomed the group, pointed out the IFLA website newspieces about the METLIBS conference in Argentina – the next one is in Barcelona in October 2024. He also mentioned that a very important meeting with the GB had taken place. Since there will be no WLIC this year, there will be a President’s meeting in Australia, for over 1 000 participants, most likely in Brisbane, Australia end of September, beginning of October. Many options are being discussed of what is going to happen there, e.g. if the green and public library awards and the best librarian award will be given there or the latter could be held during the METLIBS conference in Spain. He then referred to a meeting that Te Paea and himself participated, as members of a team working on the Code of Conduct for volunteers. He then shared his experience in Nairobi, mentioning how amazing it was to meet representatives from almost 32 countries. These meetings are key for librarians in the regions. There were a lot of good vibes, and a lot of warmth. It is very important for IFLA.

4. Report from the Nairobi Workshop and Sharjah RDC Meeting

Oral report

Ayanda (SSA RDC Chair) referred to the Nairobi workshop. The RDC had developed action plans following the workshop, informed by the presentations. We appreciated the opportunity to bond –

we now know who we are working with and each one's strengths, particularly those who will work on the VNRs. We were also able to use the same platform to mobilise engagement on the Africa-L too mailing list, to at least bring 2 members every week to the mailing list.

Alejandro highlighted also the participation from UN people and thanked SIGL for the funding. Stephen Wyber mentioned that the Nairobi workshop was a replication of what was done in Bangkok, as a major UN hub-city, both to expose the participants to what is going on at the UN and make the international work a regular part of libraries' work. In Nairobi we had participants from UN Habitat, UN Environment Programme, UNESCO, and UN Economic Commission for Africa. Alejandro Santa mentioned the mediation work for LAC countries, that he made a contact with the Argentinian ambassador in Kenya, a very young and very capable ambassador.

5. Review of Regional Division Committee Action Plans

RC 23-11-5

Alejandro congratulated the RDCs on the creation of the Action Plans. There is a common theme, to make work visible through social media. Then he suggested to hold a meeting with RC members and all the RDC officers (vice-chairs and information coordinators) Monday 27th November same time as today. Since we now have Information Officers in the RDC, and they have the responsibility for communication. The aim will be to discuss what our idea is. We need to unify the communication, in line with HQ communication. Then he gave the floor to the RDC Chairs, inviting them to speak briefly about what they have planned, highlighting in particular areas where they see scope to cooperate with others.

Diane Koen (NA RDC Chair) mentioned that having a complete global Action Plan is incredibly helpful. This will allow us to rethink and tweak our NA plan. We had the IFLA President and IFLA SG to speak to us in our monthly meeting, to understand the past year, allowed us to say that "ok, let's look forward and start working". I am very positive about the action plan.

Alejandro then asked Saif (MENA RDC Chair) to report back on his committee's meeting in Sharjah.

Saif Al-Jabri (MENA RDC Chair) mentioned that they had a very successful meeting in Sharjah, with most members attending. We also had a capacity building workshop given by HQ and the regional office was also there. It was a very good chance to meet them in person, and work in a friendly atmosphere together. We managed to complete the Action Plan. We asked all members to give us their input. From the global action plan, we can see where we can work with other RDCs.

Ertugrul Cimen (EU RDC Chair) celebrated the work of the EU RDC so far, referring to the fact that all members are highly experienced in the RDC, they are all valuable to us. There was a long discussion about the action plan. At the end we tried to decide to make it as simple as possible, because in the previous term there were several items and topics and we tried to finalise all together at the same time. Some of them we didn't manage to succeed. So, we tried to simplify. We now have only four items in our action plan and we are going to focus on some philosophical issues in the library field in EU. Democracy is getting more important than ever.

Jeanette Lebron (LAC RDC Chair) mentioned that they got feedback and gathered ideas. The aim is to simplify it as well, to meet everything that was said. We will be supporting on a local and regional sphere to highlight the role of our libraries.

Lin Li Soh (AO RDC Chair) mentioned that they decided to focus on Facebook and Instagram and maybe YouTube. They want to do an event calendar, as an advocacy tool. So, to create a calendar to add all the events in the region and they aim to work closely with the Professional Units (like climate change, preservation) and the Library Map of the World (LMW).

Ayanda Lebele (SSA RDC Chair) shared that they will continue to support regional fora, like the African IGF, and to strengthen regional networks. The workshop gave birth to multiple babies. We are working on a project on capacity building on emerging leadership.

Despina shared that the HQ will give access to the Units' Plans through the Infinity platform, in order to provide a space of discussion between the regional and professional structure and to encourage interaction and collaborations.

6. A model for the review of Regional Division Committees

RC 23.11-6.1

RC 23.11-6.2

Stephen Wyber described the paper (6.1) that discusses the reasons for evaluating how well Regional Division Committees are working, from the perspective of IFLA as an organisation and members alike. It also draws on the results of the survey of non-continuing members (6.2) as one piece of evidence in trying to determine what a successful committee looks like. He then encouraged the RC members to use this in positive terms as much as possible, because this is not an audit.

Te Paea Paringatai (Professional Council Chair) mentioned that the PC is undertaking a review of Professional Units. The subcommittee has come together and progress has been made in terms of an outline when this review will take place. We will share what this entails when it is done –maybe it will be helpful for the RC.

Diane Koen said that she shared the paper with the NA RDC Vice-Chair, Evviva and she had a very good suggestion. She suggested a subgroup of vice-chairs and let the group select the chair of this subcommittee for the assessment.

The Chair Ayanda also agreed and proposed the review to be done by people who are already in the committees, not from people outside because if you are not in the pot, it's very difficult to understand the pressure and the complexities involved. He mentioned that the decision has to be made by ourselves, the last word is for us, but sometimes we have to listen to others, external ones, they may enrichen our position. They can review but the final decision is in the hands of the committees. It will be positive to listen.

Te Paea endorses that a review is not an audit. It will help streamline any processes that we might have, identify gaps for more support needed and agrees with Ayanda that a review should be conducted by persons who sit within the structure or those delegated by the PC to do the review. And also thinks Alejandro is correct that there are processes underway that might be useful, will save you time and you can see if these fit your structure.

Vicki McDonald (IFLA President) took the floor and mentioned how good it is to see everyone and commented on a couple of things. She congratulated everyone on the work, it's all about learning and continuing to grow. It is important to have in-person meetings, she enjoyed it in Nairobi, learned about their challenges and opportunities. She couldn't make it in Sharjah. She is looking forward to seeing the group in the Hague in December. Final thing she mentioned is about the President's Meeting in Brisbane. More information will come in the next weeks, as this is part of the discussion at the upcoming GB meeting.

Ertugrul Cimen commented about the review that it shows that IFLA is transparent if we give others - externals to review our work.

Alejandro agreed with Ertugrul. We need to go along that line. We are being looked, watched and we have responsibility and it's important to provide transparency. He then mentioned the survey that came from IFLA HQ about the volunteers who didn't continue on IFLA Committees: why did they not continue to be volunteers? It is not a big number, but it's important to consider things like why didn't we have enough candidates or is language the issue?

Stephen mentioned that 50% response rate is not bad. The main thing is that it's a reminder of how we can make sure the experience of those taking part is positive and engaging and as interesting as possible. What can we do to keep good, promising people on board?

Alejandro commented that we need to involve them, give them the voice, responsibilities, listen to them, be part of the work. This is why regional meetings are important.

Diane seconds what Alejandro said about the regional meetings. Looking forward to the in-person regional meeting in NA too.

Lin Li asked if there could be a regional breakdown, in terms of the survey of why people didn't continue. Stephen replied that this is not possible, it would risk identification, because of the small amount of responses.

Ayanda mentioned that the workshop in Nairobi helped us be together with people who used to volunteer for IFLA in the past and they are now mentors to the SSA RDC, they are our patriots.

7. Planning to make the most of the December meeting

RC 23-11-7

Alejandro referred to the upcoming in-person RC meeting in the Hague in December.

Te Paea confirmed that it will be herself representing the Professional Council/Units. If you need anything from me, let me know so that I can work with the PU and provide these.

Stephen mentioned that on Friday there will be short slots/presentations with the HQ comms and membership teams. It's good to see a range of colleague from the teams and get first-hand information from these.

8. Update on Regional Council Action Plan and Next Steps

**Oral report
RC 23-11-8**

Lin Li will circulate the draft action plan again, enhance the social media presence. The reason why we have a meeting on the 27 Nov is 1) to talk about the comms plan, and 2) to see what the best practices are around RDCs and UN SDGs -this is key to put on the LMW, stories etc. 3) advocacy: build advocacy capacity, if we look at the survey, all RDCs talk about digital inclusion, copyright and library laws -these are universal themes, as it is shown in the results from the survey of priorities among deep-dive themes (document 8.1). We want to think around capacity building strong library associations -bring this back. Some library associations have dedicated staff and some work with volunteers -important to review and look into this. 4) action plans –we shall see if there are any common – global actions. 5) regional advocacy priorities survey: we may want to look again. We want to get input and comments.

9. Reports from Regional Division Committee Chairs

Oral reports (if any)

No updates were provided.

10. AOB

No other business was discussed.