



## Report of the President, Sinikka Sipilä

---

Dear colleagues

Once again, it has been an intensive and interesting conference week. I hope that you have gained new knowledge, enjoyed new experiences, reinforced your old friendships and created new ones. I trust we all can go home enriched and empowered by the information and insights emerging from the presentations and posters as well as the fruitful discussions with colleagues. The World Library and Information Congress is an inspiring experience, especially for the newcomers, whose session I had the pleasure to attend at the beginning of the conference. I am convinced that all of us, not just the newcomers, appreciate the atmosphere of this multicultural and multidimensional professional convention in the unique African setting. We can already congratulate our hosts for a successful conference!

My report will cover some of the highlights of IFLA's activities after the World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) that took place in Lyon in August last year. It was a very successful conference with nearly 4000 participants. I would like to pass on our warm thanks to the French National Committee and the French library community.

One of the highlights was the launch of the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development, which was aimed to influence the United Nations Post -2015 Development Agenda. Since August last year, IFLA has continued to engage in activities to support the Development Agenda. IFLA has now gathered more than 570 signatories from libraries and other institutions to support the Declaration.

After many months of negotiations, on 2 August 2015, the 193 Member States of the UN agreed on the finalized text to be adopted as the UN post-2015 development agenda, "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The document will be formally approved at the UN Summit in September 2015.

This has been a major achievement of IFLA's advocacy work. IFLA welcomes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially the inclusion of access to information, literacy, knowledge and skills, culture and the role of civil society and government institutions in implementing and reviewing the agenda.

A further focus for IFLA has been to continue to promote the IFLA Trend Report and to increase its translation into as many languages as possible after the launch of the Report at IFLA WLIC in Singapore in 2013. The Report has been discussed and debated at conferences throughout the year. For instance, I

have spoken about the Report in all IFLA Regions and throughout Europe, encouraging library and information professionals to start discussions how best to implement the transformation of libraries, which is absolutely essential for securing their future.

One of the major events where the Trend Report and the Lyon Declaration were discussed was my second IFLA President's Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey in June this year. Under the title of "The Art of Transforming Libraries", this President's Meeting explored the issues related to the changes faced by libraries all around the world today. The IFLA Trend Report as well as the Lyon Declaration set the scene for the other topics; these included transforming technologies, legal regulations and their impact on information technologies, transformation of public libraries and knowledge economy. The aim was to advance our understanding of the needs and modes for transforming libraries. The results of that meeting can help libraries to adapt to the new technological, legal and other requirements with which they have to live on a daily basis. I am very grateful to our Turkish colleagues for hosting this important event in such a memorable way.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the Trend Report has resulted in many meetings where change or transformation has been discussed. In Finland, in February we organised an international conference 'Ahead of the curve: recognizing and reacting to growing trends'. We discussed the trends and asked the question if libraries and librarians are ready for such a transformation, what do they view as their future and how well have they prepared for it. In Denmark, in the city of Århus, the Annual Conference of the Danish Library Association focused on how libraries can change lives. We also visited the new City library of Århus that will be officially opened in September. It is an excellent example of the transformation of a public library into a citizens' centre, a community hub. The Annual Conference of the Mexican Librarians' Association explored extensively the topic 'Librarians as agents for change'.

During the past year, I had a chance to meet colleagues and library associations and visit libraries in many European countries and all IFLA regions. In addition to Mexico in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, I visited Asia and Oceania and attended in Bangkok, Thailand, the CONSAL Conference 'ASEAN Aspirations: Libraries for Sustainable Advancement' focusing on the development of libraries in the South East Asian countries. In Africa, I was pleased to attend the launch of the South African Library Week themed 'Connect@ your Library' in Cape Town in March and visit the IFLA Regional Office for Africa in Pretoria.

Since 2009, IFLA has worked hard with its partners at the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) to promote a binding legal instrument on exceptions and limitations for libraries and archives. Last year the attempt was blocked by Group B countries including United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and the European Union's 28 member states. In June this year, delegations from every other region around the world, outside of Europe, demonstrated their willingness to participate in international discussion on concrete proposals that support libraries and archives. Even although the EU recognises that copyright exceptions for libraries are essential and must be harmonised in order to facilitate innovation, their position at WIPO is holding back the momentum generated from countries around the world. IFLA is working together with EBLIDA, the European lobby organization for libraries to convince the EU to change its stance.

When thinking of the future of IFLA and libraries I would like to mention two encouraging examples.

Firstly, the IFLA International Leaders' Programme took place in 2012-2014, concluding in August at the Lyon WLIC. This proved to be an important programme for IFLA to train emerging professionals for advocacy work. All the Associates have found it invaluable in advancing their knowledge and skills on how to lobby and advocate for libraries. Now, we can welcome two new IFLA Governing Board Members Victoria Okoije from Nigeria and Margaret Allen from Australia who come from the Associates' group; they are great examples of the success of this programme.

Secondly, I was privileged to attend the BOBCATSSS 2015 Conference in the Czech Republic built around the theme 'Design, Innovation, Participation'. The conference that was very professionally organised by the library and information students from the Czech Republic and Finland, convinced me that the future of our sector lies in very capable hands. The themes fitted very well into the discussions about the transformation of libraries and their services and to the changes that are needed to take libraries to the next level.

Throughout 2014, IFLA has worked with many initiatives and activities for building strong libraries and strong societies. I thank all our members and partners for contributing to another successful year. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Governing Board, Secretary General Jennefer Nicholson, and the IFLA Staff, for your able and dedicated work for the good of IFLA. Furthermore, we could not have reached our goals without the contributions of our IFLA Officers and Committee Members to whom I also extend my sincere thanks.

Thank you for your attention!

**Sinikka Sipilä**

IFLA President 2013-2015