

| International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) | |
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| Document nr | RC 23-05-2.1 |
| Agenda Item | 2.1 |
| Subject | Minutes, Regional Council Meeting, 9 March 2023 |
| From | Nthabiseng Kotsokoane, Chair |
| Purpose | Adoption of Agenda |
| Date | 4 May 2023 |
| Note | Minutes were approved on 4 May 2023 |
| Recommendations | Approve the minutes |

MINUTES

**The eight meeting of the Regional Council held on Thursday 9 March 2023
from 21.00 – 22.45 CEST by teleconference call via Zoom**

1. Welcome, apologies and agreement of agenda

RC 23-03-1.1

Present:

- Regional Council Members: Nthabiseng Kotsokoane (Chair), Winston Roberts (Asia-Oceania), Stuart Hamilton (Europe), Imad Bashir (MENA), Alejandro Santa (LAC), Sarah Kaddu (Sub-Saharan Africa), Te Paea Paringatai (Professional Council Chair)
- Others: Stephen Wyber (IFLA HQ), Despina Gerasimidou (IFLA HQ)

Apologies:

- Regional Council Members: Julius Jefferson (North America), Helen Mandl (IFLA Deputy Secretary General), Barbara Lison (IFLA President)

The Chair welcomed participants.

The agenda was approved.

2. Agreement of Minutes

RC 23-03-2.1

The Regional Council Chair reminded the meeting about the previous meeting in the Hague, characterizing as a very interesting and interactive one.

The Asia-Oceania and Europe RDC Chairs noted that they had sent apologies for the previous meeting, and that these should be added to the minutes.

In response to other questions, it was noted that money from the Gates Foundation would likely last longer than expected due to fewer possibilities for activities during COVID-19.

The minutes were approved.

3. Welcome by the Chair

Oral report

The RC Chair shared a short report of the last GB meeting on the 27th February, highlighting steps to continue to deliver the plan for securing IFLA's future and providing direction and guidance for the

Federation over the coming months. There had been approval to request video presentations from all the people standing for president-elect, treasurer and GB members, approval for principles about responding to situations of conflict, approval of the Handbook for IFLA volunteers (with thanks to the committee that worked on this, including the AO RDC Chair), and an update to the Rules of Procedure.

Furthermore, there had been work on a Code of Ethics for GB members, a revised budget and expenditure, a social media strategy, guidelines about the English language, and agreement on provisions around hybrid participation in WLIC 2023, as well as the 2023 General Assembly.

In response to a question about the recruitment process for the Secretary General, the RC Chair noted that a third-party, “Society”, was running the process, with a GB sub-committee including the RC Chair as part of the picture. She noted that there had been around 40 candidates from all over the world, with shortlisted candidates sharing videos to be reviewed by the GB, and interviews in April.

4. Professional Council, Governing Board Updates

Oral report

The Professional Council Chair highlighted that the PC is now focused on the Units’ action plans and the upcoming WLIC. She also mentioned that there isn't any significant change and that a lot of the PC updates about WLIC are shared on the Officers’ Basecamp site. The PC Chair shared the [Officers’ Basecamp link to PC update](#) and the [RC’ Basecamp link to PC update](#).

The RC Chair mentioned a planned invitation to the PC to a future RC meeting, as a way for the PC to understand the RC priorities without interrupting the RC meeting discussion. The RC Chair highlighted at this point that all the RC meetings are open to anyone, so if people from the PC or anyone else wants to come in, they are welcome.

The RC Chair highlighted the importance of the PC Chair participating at the last RC meeting in the Hague. The PC Chair noted that the participation at this meeting in the Hague was very important and thanked the RC for the warm welcome and inclusion.

5. Regional Division Committee Updates (in writing unless there are urgent questions)

Oral report, reports shared by e-mail

Council members were encouraged to share updates about their work in writing in advance of the meeting. Particularly pressing issues were raised during the meeting.

Imad Bachir (MENA) shared that the MENA RDC is participating at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon (14-16 March). It's an opportunity to meet all the Arab delegations and to talk to them about the involvement of libraries and the SDGs contributions. Also, we'll be giving the chance to talk to the audience, and one of the main session about some cases from the Arab countries concerning the libraries and the SDGs. IFLA MENA RDC is having a booth for a whole day, thanking the help provided by Stephen and Despina. The other thing is that the MENA RDC started the phase II from the Advocacy training program and soon there's going to be a sort of webinar by Steven and Dina from the Arab office in Alexandria Library to talk about advocacy to the trainees and to all librarians after that. There has been a resignation from the MENA RDC Vice-Chair, Abeer from Qatar National Library (QNL), due to the fact that she is too busy and she cannot handle it for the rest of this term. So, in our last meeting we have a co-opted candidate

from the QNL. It was approved by the committee just to let you know, and to have your approval on that. She is a PhD student at the Sheffield University. She's very good. I know her very well, and she is known to most of the committee members. Regarding the position of the Vice chair for the rest of the committee term, there have been no suggestions from anyone, so I am still waiting. Early January we had a very successful one-day conference and collaboration with the Moroccan University in Casablanca about SDGs and libraries in North Africa. Hannah from Morocco will write something about this and will send to Despina for publication on IFLA's website.

Alejandro (LAC): the Committee had held its mid-term in Puerto Rico. Alejandro noted the low profile of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean in general, and so this was an opportunity to address this, with various senior librarians across the region. They also signed agreements for 'passageways' as structures to help exchange experiences and ideas across the region, for example around advocacy. Another focus is around the SDGs – building on what had been done at the 2022 High-Level Political Forum, Alejandro had promoted this, and felt that we should aim to get a longer and more formal space to talk about libraries at the UN.

The RDC Chair asked everyone to send their reports in writing before the RC meetings, so that there is an exchange of updates through emails before the RC meetings. This way the RC meetings will run faster and there will be only questions from others on each RDC work.

6. World Library and Information Congress

6.1 Update on plans for regional hubs

RC 23-03-6.1

The Council was invited to review the concept for regional hubs agreed by the Governing Board, and RDC Chairs (outside of Europe) were invited to make suggestions (including for their own institutions), for such hubs.

6.2 Planning for regional sessions

Oral reports

The RC Chair called for volunteers to join a sub-committee with two volunteers to review and evaluate the RDC proposals for WLIC sessions and provide feedback to organisers. Where sessions were joint with a professional unit, it was recommended to pick which committee would lead in order to avoid duplicating reviews with the PC, but it should be submitted to both.

Concerning an RC session at WLIC, there was agreement that this should focus on explaining what the RC and RDCs are doing, in order to raise awareness. Alejandro, Julius and Winston volunteers to lead in coming up with a structure.

7. Effective working practices

7.1 Follow-up from the survey on meeting practices

RC 23-03-7.1

At the December meeting, the Regional Council reviewed the report of the survey into meeting practices. This has now been converted into a checklist which can be endorsed and subsequently used by the Regional Council and Division Committees. Stephen referred the Council to the attached paper and the Council endorsed the checklist.

7.2 Initial results from surveys on communications, emerging leaders, sub-groups

Oral report

Despina shared preliminary results from the three surveys – focusing on communications, emerging leaders and the use of sub-groups in order to deliver on action plans, noting that detailed written report with checklists will follow. The deadline was shortly before the meeting, and so too late to produce a report, but preliminary conclusions were discussed.

Many things are in common in all RDCs and there are of course things that are being done in a different way. The main things that came out were:

Communications: there are top 3 ways of communication within your teams, the RDC internal mailing list; WhatsApp groups and video conferencing monthly or even bi-monthly; more work needs to be done with the open mailing list, since there seems to be a strong desire for this untapped potential -open mailing lists should be used more often. There is a time challenge for many, since also comms was slightly delayed to launch, due to the fact that a lot of the term has been spent to find the RDC direction. Some suggestions from the RDC Chairs through the surveys were to boost communication, run comms from even the beginning of the term and gradually enhance; never forget to introduce themselves as RDC people, wherever they talk and deliver speeches at conference etc. and have a central HQ comms campaign with mainstream media and specialized magazines (aim for the cover).

Subgroups: Every RDC works with subgroups, either by task/action, or in some cases, as subregional groups. Most RDCs asked for volunteers in order for the subgroups to be created. There is a lead for each subgroup, they work autonomously, they meet on their own, and then report back to the committees with a summary. So, the interesting thing here is that the level of the output of each subgroup depends on 3 things: the leader's capability and availability, the members' availability and workload, and the clear common understanding of the task.

Emerging leaders: Plenty of different shares of the committee to count as emerging leaders vary from 0% to 65%. Challenges of emerging leaders include lack of IFLA knowledge (what it is, how it works); new emerging leaders struggle to get national funding compared to the senior colleagues; veterans insisting on not giving opportunities to emerging leaders; the 2-year RDC term is considered a short one, so it doesn't give a long enough to run, it's more of a promise to be elected for a second term. There is informal (not formal) mentoring happening, but there are also other interesting ways of on how to involve emerging leaders. A great example of impact was that someone sent a job opportunity to an emerging leader and that person got the job. Generally this is an area that all RDCs agree that it's of high importance and priority and that this means that more time in the short 2-year term needs to be allocated for ideation on how to watch the library radar for emerging library leaders.

The Europe RDC Chair noted that there was a sense that expectations of RDCs were higher than those for other Sections, and so that it would be important to ensure that the next round of volunteers are aware of expectations, in case that meant we would need to recruit differently. The Chair agreed, but noted that there has been the flexibility throughout to amend action plans. Continuity from one RDC to the next would nonetheless help ensure that lessons are carried across.

Following a comment from the AO RDC chair, it was noted that it would be important to be clear, from the beginning, of what the role of RDCs are, in order to help with planning.

The LAC RDC Chair felt that there had been some helpful clarity already, but crucially, we could continue to work on the basis of what had already been done.

8. Planning

8.1 Update on how to support the induction of the next Regional Council and Division Committees

RC 23-03-8.1

With IFLA Elections being held this year, there will be a transition of Committee members from their current positions. To make this as smooth as possible, a draft transition plan has been developed to ensure that work of the new Regional Division Committees and Council can begin as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The Regional Council was asked to review this draft transition plan and give feedback and to create an RC subcommittee that will develop a concept of an RC and RDC Welcome Guide.

Volunteers were invited to come forwards to help in preparing this guide – Stuart, Winston and Nthabi agreed to do so.

Following questions, it was noted that new committees would be responsible for their own action plans, and that the outgoing committee would only need to submit a report on their work in 2021-23.

It was agreed that incoming RDC members would be invited to current RDC Basecamps early, to help them get used to the work of the committee.

8.2 Gathering evidence about priorities to support action planning

RC 23-03-8.2

IFLA HQ presented the proposal to rerun the IFLA Regional Advocacy Priorities Survey, and asked for input on potential changes. It was suggested to ask about what evidence is needed to support advocacy – a question would be included on this. It was also suggested that a definition of advocacy be included.

8.3 Brief overview of IFLA nominations results so far

RC 23-03-8.3

IFLA HQ provided an overview of regional diversity of nominations for volunteer positions across IFLA. The RC Chair noted that there are a lot of sections that are not very diverse, with a need for more candidates from MENA and SSA. The Regional Offices are also going to assist with this, but more is needed to make people active and willing to stand.

It was noted that a lot of work had taken place in MENA, with higher awareness of and interest in IFLA. However, it continued to be a challenge to show that IFLA wasn't just a European organisation. Change would take time.

The RC Chair highlighted the importance of encouraging people to cast their votes and that there will be a lot of co-opting, if there are sections who need people.

9. Update on SDG and Internet Governance work

RC 23-03-9.1

IFLA HQ presented the paper. Following questions, it was noted that IFLA would propose sessions for the IGF, and ask FAIFE and the RC as well about these before submitting, and in particular, the Asia-Oceania Regional Division Committee, given that the IGF is happening in Japan.

There was agreement on doing a survey on SDG work by associations, and that work on this should be owned by the Regional Council. This could also help with framing libraries in the UN context.

On the Internet Manifesto, the idea of a revision was welcomed, and in particular the idea that the Manifesto could be revised in a way that includes the Federation as a whole.

The LAC RDC Chair underlined that language remains a major issue, and called for a stronger focus on how we can make better use of technologies in order to facilitate interpretation between languages.

The RC Chair agreed with Alejandro, pointing out that the IT section has a special interest group on AI. They actually ran a workshop in Singapore and it was very good.

10. AOB

The RC Chair noted that there would be two more meetings before WLIC.