



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES ET DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER BIBLIOTHEKARISCHEN VEREINE UND INSTITUTIONEN
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE BIBLIOTECARIOS Y BIBLIOTECAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ БИБЛИОТЕЧНЫХ АССОЦИАЦИЙ И УЧРЕЖДЕНИЙ

To all IFLA National Association Members

September 2005

Dear colleagues,

Recently a number of colleagues have asked about IFLA's strategy for advocacy at the second World Summit on the Information Society, which will be held in Tunis on 16-18 November 2005. I hope that the following background information will help answer that question.

As you know, the first phase of the Summit in Geneva in 2003 was very successful for libraries. We were able to insert libraries and our professional concerns into the discussions, with the result that they are prominently mentioned in the official documents of WSIS, the *Declaration of Principles* and the *Action Plan* (www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=1161|1160).

For more background see also the IFLA commentary www.ifla.org/III/wsis070604.html. These results were achieved thanks to the hard work of many IFLA members, especially our national association members and our Swiss colleagues.

In the second phase of the Summit, only three major political matters remain. These are the financing of improvement actions, monitoring of their implementation and the governance of the Internet. The draft documents on these issues can be found at www.itu.int/wsis/documents/index2.html.

IFLA has developed our position on Internet governance which is summarized in the attached position statement. Feel free to use it in discussions with your national WSIS delegations. In regard to financing and the monitoring of implementation, IFLA's position has been to support multistakeholder approaches which will bring together governments, governmental organisations, business and civil society to collaborate in the development of an inclusive global information society with benefits for all. We recognise that this will require a long term commitment if the needs of all peoples are to be addressed and continue to assert the fundamental importance of access to information.

Because the most essential political decisions were made already in 2003, IFLA's strategy has been to ensure that the gains we made in Geneva are not lost from view amidst the further discussions and bargaining in Tunis. We are concentrating on promoting libraries generally and more specifically on reinforcing and making visible the essential and positive role of libraries in building the information society.

As part of this strategy, prior to the Summit itself, IFLA and Bibliotheca Alexandrina will hold a pre-Summit Conference on "Libraries – the Information Society in Action". It will be held in Alexandria, Egypt, on 10 and 11 November 2005. The invitation to this trilingual event (English-



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES ET DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER BIBLIOTHEKARISCHEN VEREINE UND INSTITUTIONEN
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE BIBLIOTECARIOS Y BIBLIOTECAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ БИБЛИОТЕЧНЫХ АССОЦИАЦИЙ И УЧРЕЖДЕНИЙ

French-Arabic) is attached. The pre-Summit is targeted to delegates who are involved in decision-making in relation to the Information Society in their countries and at the Tunis Summit.

On that occasion, IFLA will launch the Alexandria Manifesto on *Libraries, the Information Society in Action*. The draft is attached for your information. At the end of the statement a number of related statements are mentioned. Two are of particular interest: the first is a communiqué being developed by the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL).

The second is a statement to be developed at the Information Literacy Colloquium that will be held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina before the pre-Summit. All these policy papers approach the role of libraries and literacy in the Information Society from different perspectives, but reinforce our central argument that libraries *are* the Information Society in action.

Our advocacy efforts will not end in Tunis. It is very important that the outcomes of the Tunis Summit should be followed up promptly and energetically at the national level. IFLA intends to continue to work on these crucial issues in partnership with library associations, libraries and librarians after the Summit. These will have to be persuasive in influencing their decision-makers to develop and implement good Information Society strategies, that give a central place to libraries in each country. The library-friendly strategies also need to be reflected in national budgets.

If you have comments or suggestions on IFLA's WSIS advocacy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Peter Johan Lor
Secretary General