

## *In the Name of God*

### ***The National Library's role in cultural diplomacy***

*The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions plays an outstanding role both in cultural diplomacy and in cultural relations. IFLA enjoys actual and potential capacities member countries can benefit from and at the same time contribute to their further strengthening.*

*IFLA is regarded to be one of the potentials within the framework of which part of the cultural diplomacy could be followed up. We know that among elements and components effective in foreign policy matters, none is more sustainable and influential than the cultural element.*

*Culture and cultural components comprise the fourth pillar of foreign policy which in most cases constitute the sub-layers and foundations of the three other pillars. This type of diplomacy not only can be raised at the official level among governments, but can also prove applicable and efficient in public spaces and within the framework of general diplomacy.*

*Cultural diplomacy usually plays its role with an aim of establishing relations with countries and nations through culture, art and education and its importance is realized when we understand the differences of cultural diplomacy with political diplomacy.*

*Cultural diplomacy unlike political diplomacy:*

*1. Is not based on power*

*2. is not transient and volatile*

*3. Is not confined merely to relations between governments but rather leads to internal and deep relations among nations*

*4. Is not inconsistent and would not be removed with the rise and fall of statesmen and political regimes*

*5. Contains broad based, eloquent and moderate language. Sustainable world peace is maintained in the light of cultural diplomacy and soft mechanisms. In cultural diplomacy, ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture are exchanged among governments, organizations and nations in order to increasingly strengthen mutual understanding and deeper friendship and reduce fighting and conflict.*

*Of course, enforcement and implementation of this diplomacy has its own hardship and complications. For example, if we intend to realize sustainable peace in the world through cultural diplomacy we will need prudence, determination, resolve and different plans and even more importantly we will need “courage”. Some imagine that “courage” is applied only in wars. Contrary to this notion, Mr. Hassan Rouhani, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran states: “Courage in time of peace is more important than courage in time of war.”*

*6. Benefits obtained from cultural diplomacy usually do not remain within the framework of interaction between two or more countries. All governments and nations will take advantage of these benefits. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is a window for interaction with the entire world. In addition, such benefits generate synergy and also enhance cognitive, reflective and inter-subjective relations. Based on such processes and applications, cultural diplomacy avoids politicization. Cultural diplomacy is not a political tool but rather an independent target.*

*7. Cultural diplomacy, especially when followed up by international organizations, is not power-driven but rather network-oriented. It can be said that one of the roots of Manuel Castells theory can be explained through cultural diplomacy. He believes that the world has changed and traditional powers are declining and disintegrating.*

*The author says: "Power is no longer concentrated in institutions (the state), organizations (capitalist firms), or symbolic controllers (corporate media, churches). It is diffused in global networks of wealth, power, information and images, which circulate and transmute in a system of variable geometry and dematerialized geography. Yet it does not disappear.*

*"The new power lies in codes of information and in images of representation produced by people's minds and constructed in identities. These minds and identities tend to contradict the dominant logic of the network society engaging in defensive and offensive struggles around the fundamentals of space, time and technology. Here three of the most important and strongly interrelated theses of Castells' trilogy appear:*

- Logic based on the “power of flows” rather than “flows of power” (the “flow society”)*
- Social morphology dominates social action*
- “Power of flows” more important than “flows of power”*

*Despite the privileges cited for cultural diplomacy, it must be noted that “cultural relations”, includes “cultural diplomacy”. Although cultural diplomacy takes place within the framework of cultural relations, however extensive aspects of cultural relations could be developed outside the diplomatic frameworks. In other words, in cultural diplomacy the government would enter into the circle of relations willingly or*

*unwillingly. That is why the term diplomacy is used but parts of cultural relations take place outside the frameworks of interaction of governments. Scholars, artists, publishers and other activists in the field of culture communicate in expanded spaces like this.*

*The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, both within the framework of cultural diplomacy and non-diplomatic and unofficial relations, plays a significant role. IFLA's potentials are such that it can address the needs of men of thought, pen, culture and art in the area of book, print materials, book keeping and information dissemination. Such a task would be realized in the most desirable way when all members make utmost efforts in supporting and strengthening this Federation.*

*With the specifications cited for cultural diplomacy and cultural relations, IFLA also possesses such characteristics as an international cultural organization in the field of book, book keeping, information dissemination, education and research. IFLA's mission is permanent and not limited to relations between governments. It is rather oriented towards internal and deep relations among nations. IFLA's mission does not undergo change with political change. IFLA's language is broad based and eloquent. Basically, book keepers and book readers are not seeking war. They are the noblest messengers of peace in the world. IFLA seeks sharing the advantages with its members and in doing so it would not hesitate to offer its resources and possessions to all member states, developed, developing and weak countries and would not discriminate in this regard.*

*With the development of virtual spaces, IFLA has updated itself with the requirements of the day and has been connected with "network society" and under its light, is disseminating information in inter subjective relations. IFLA, in addition to formal and diplomatic relations, establishes links with scholars, artists, and activists in the field of culture, particularly book compilers - including authors, translators, editors and publishers. Finally, if we consider the aim of cultural diplomacy to be understanding and awareness, participation and affecting public opinion, institutions, organizations and governments, IFLA, for its part, cooperates closely to attain this goal.*

*Iran, with an ancient history, culture and civilizational record, is a great cultural source not only for the Iranian nation but all the nations of the world. One of the methods to benefit from Iran's culture, history and civilization is written works and library resources. IFLA and other international cultural organizations can prepare the ground for transfer and promulgation of these works and resources.*

*The Islamic Republic of Iran, with strong belief in and commitment to its own indigenous and national culture, recognizes other cultures and believes that non-*

*Iranian cultures contain very precious principles and properties all should take advantage of in the course of cultural exchanges. However, it is against “cultural self-expanding”. Some countries believe that their respective culture is among the most favorable cultures. The Islamic Republic of Iran intends to change “cultural self-expanding” which is rooted in bias and stems from closed minds to “trans-cultural self-expanding”. To this end, it is seeking the approach of understanding other cultures and promoting cultural interactions.*

*Although members of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions have always forwarded proposals for the strengthening of IFLA, the National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a member of IFLA would like to present a number of proposals. It is hoped that the details and execution mechanisms of these proposals would be examined in expert meetings.*

*1. The National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran through launching a “Scientific and Cultural Think Tank” has gained successful experiences in holding conferences, scientific lectures, study of written documents, unveiling of books, etc. Hereby, application of synergy of libraries is recommended.*

*2. Strong world libraries have a grave responsibility towards assisting libraries in the developing countries. Such an important task has been predicted in IFLA plans of action under the title of “global access to information” and “advancement of book keeping in the developing world”. It is necessary to further strengthen the mechanisms for these plans.*

*3. “Inter-cultural” dialogues and associating world scholars with each other at libraries is possible.*

*4. NGOs have been established in the remote areas of the world which have no concerns except for humanity, seeking promotion and participation and are active in the field of book and book reading. Identification of these organizations and constant communication with them could produce suitable achievements for IFLA and its members.*

*5. National libraries can be considered an aim of cultural tourism. Its prerequisite is to provide special attraction, creation of necessary infrastructures and organizing different exhibitions and museum in the field of documents, books and publications.*

*6. Joint transnational programs in the field of book keeping and bibliography with the participation of intellectuals and members of IFLA can be planned and implemented.*

*7. Multilateral and network communication among national libraries as well as between national libraries and university libraries requires further expansion and development which should be emphasized more than before.*

*8. Increasing the speed of digitalization of resources, especially manuscripts and old versions and the possibility of their exchange in virtual space among libraries, demands IFLA's official, principled and extensive support.*

*9. The share of book and library in cultural diplomacy and cultural relations should be defined and elucidated precisely and strengthened more than before. National libraries play a significant role in cultural diplomacy of various countries. In this way exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture can be promoted.*

*10. Protection of and support for communication in virtual space and facilitation of membership of online users. Such an important task would lead to an outstanding increase in the number of those interested in book and book reading and facilitate their access.*

*11. Holding specialized trainings within the framework of IFLA responsibilities for the staff in the areas of book keeping, bibliography and publication.*

*12. Identifying the audience and monitoring and meeting the needs of the audience and regulating plans and executive methods for addressing their needs.*

*13. Strengthening the IFLA publication or launching a new publication under the title 'book and library news' with the participation of all IFLA members. This publication could transfer the latest scientific achievements in the field of book so that the world people would be provided with the possibility to take advantage of these achievements.*

*Transfer and exchange of innovations in the field of administrative and organizational affairs of libraries and content of the books would be possible through this channel. In this publication prominent and extraordinary scholars and scientists could be introduced. In addition, events and awards of the "book of the year" which usually happen within the framework of national and transnational festivals could be reflected. Due to the absence of the media or weakness in information dissemination for public awareness in connection with cultural and national brands, introducing cultural and national brands of member countries would be possible through this publication.*

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