

SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS

STATEMENT BY DR ALEX BYRNE

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

18 November 2005

Your Excellency, President of the World Summit on the Information Society, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. We congratulate those who have been involved in this long WSIS process on what has been achieved to date and encourage full commitment to the implementation of the goals expressed in Geneva and here in Tunis.

I have the honour to speak to you as the President of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions which is the global organisation for libraries and information services and represents more than 500 thousand library service points as well as the 2.5 billion registered library users around the world.

We are concerned with the young child who opens his first book or clicks on her first website, with the student who researches a topic, with the professional building a career, with the farmer trying to be more competitive, with the researcher using e-journals to investigate a new material or prevention of a disease and with all the people whose lives are changed through ready access to relevant and reliable information in any format.

We stand with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other distinguished speakers in stating without equivocation

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The Federation and our member organisations are vitally involved with the creation of the Information Society and its consequences for both economic and social development. To advance that agenda, which is vital for a secure and fair world, last week the Federation held a pre Summit meeting, *Libraries: the Information Society in Action* together with UNESCO and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. We discussed the key issues of the information society and proclaimed a manifesto, *The Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action*.

The Manifesto recognises that libraries and information services are essential to the roll out of the inclusive Information Society. Their impartial operation helps to safeguard universal civil rights and intellectual freedom. The unique feature of libraries and information services is that they respond to the particular questions and needs of individuals, complementing the general transmission of knowledge by the mass media. They build capacity and provide support and

training for effective use of digital and other information resources. Libraries are critical to the development agenda and help to realise the Millennium Development Goals, including reduction of poverty.

To enable access to information by all peoples, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions is committed to the fundamental human rights to know, learn and communicate without restriction. It opposes censorship and supports balance and fairness in intellectual property regulation. IFLA is also vitally concerned to promote multilingual content, cultural diversity and the special needs of Indigenous peoples, minorities and those with disabilities.

IFLA urges national, regional and local governments as well as international organisations to

- invest in library and information services as vital elements of Information Society strategies, policies and budgets
- promote open access to information and recognise the importance of information literacy and vigorously support for strategies to create a literate and skilled populace which can advance and benefit from the global Information Society.

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The version of this paper to be loaded to the website includes the key statements by IFLA, the Information Literacy Experts Meeting and the Conference of Directors of National Libraries.

Your Excellency, delegates and observers, I thank you for your time and encourage you to continue the work to create an information society for all, an information society which guarantees the dual freedoms of access to information and of expression and which will be facilitated by strengthening the global network of libraries.

Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action

Libraries and information services contribute to the sound operation of the inclusive Information Society.

They enable intellectual freedom by providing access to information, ideas and works of imagination in any medium and regardless of frontiers.

They help to safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights impartially and by opposing any form of censorship.

The unique role of libraries and information services is that they respond to the particular questions and needs of individuals. This complements the general transmission of knowledge by the media, for example, and makes libraries and information services vital to a democratic and open Information Society. Libraries are essential for a well informed citizenry and transparent governance, as well as for the take-up of e-government.

They also build capacity by promoting information literacy and providing support and training for effective use of information resources, including Information and Communication Technologies. This is especially critical in promoting the development agenda because human resources are central to economic progress. In these ways libraries contribute significantly to addressing the digital divide and the information inequality that results from it. They help to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality, including reduction of poverty. They will do more with quite modest investments. The value of the return is at least 4-6 times the investment.

In pursuit of the goal of access to information by all peoples, IFLA supports balance and fairness in copyright. IFLA is also vitally concerned to promote multilingual content, cultural diversity and the special needs of Indigenous peoples and minorities.

IFLA and libraries and information services share the common vision of an Information Society for all adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003. That

vision promotes an inclusive society based on the fundamental right of human beings both to access and to express information without restriction and in which everyone will be able to create, access, use and share information and knowledge.

IFLA urges national, regional and local governments as well as international organisations to:

- invest in library and information services as vital elements in their Information Society strategies, policies and budgets;
- upgrade and extend existing library networks to obtain the greatest possible benefits for their citizens and communities;
- support unrestricted access to information and freedom of expression;
- promote open access to information and address structural and other barriers to access; and
- recognise the importance of information literacy and vigorously support strategies to create a literate and skilled populace which can advance and benefit from the global Information Society.

Adopted in Alexandria, Egypt, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, on 11 November 2005

Associated documents:

Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto

IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto: The school library in teaching and learning for all

IFLA Internet Manifesto

Maintaining our digital memory: a declaration of support for the World Summit on the Information Society. Communiqué from the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL), Oslo, August 2005.

Beacons of the Information Society - Alexandria Statement on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning. High level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 6-9 November 2005.

IFLA Statement on Open Access to Scholarly Literature and Research Documentation.

See <http://www.ifla.org/V/cdoc/policies.htm#Manifestos> for other statements.

Some further facts

There are worldwide:

- more than half a million library service points,
- 15.000 km of library shelving,
- well over half a million Internet connections in libraries,
- 1,5 trillion loan transactions each year,
- and 2.5 billion registered library users.

The claim that libraries return at least 4-6 times the investment is supported by numerous studies.

See for example:

Svanhild Aabø. The Value of Public Libraries. Paper presented at the World Library and Information Congress in Oslo, August 2005. <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/papers/119e-Aabo.pdf>

Measuring our value. British Library 2003. <http://www.bl.uk/pdf/measuring.pdf>

José-Marie Griffith & Donald King. Taxpayers return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries, September 2004. <http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/roi/publications.cfm>

Daniel D. Barron et. al.. The Economic Impact of Public Libraries in South Carolina, 2005.

<http://www.libsci.sc.edu/SCEIS/home.htm>



Beacons of the Information Society

The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Celebrating this week's confirmation of the site of the Pharos of Alexandria, one of the ancient wonders of the world, the participants in the High Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 6-9 November 2005 proclaim that information literacy and lifelong learning are the beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom.

Information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations.

Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all.

Information literacy

- comprises the competencies to recognise information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and social contexts;
- is crucial to the competitive advantage of individuals, enterprises (especially small and medium enterprises), regions and nations;
- provides the key to effective access, use and creation of content to support economic development, education, health and human services, and all other aspects of contemporary societies and thereby provides the vital foundation for fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on the Information Society; and
- extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretative skills across professional boundaries and empower individuals and communities.

Within the context of the developing Information Society, we urge governments and intergovernmental organisations to pursue policies and programs to promote information literacy and lifelong learning. In particular, we ask them to support

- regional and thematic meetings which will facilitate the adoption of information literacy and lifelong learning strategies within specific regions and socioeconomic sectors;
- professional development of personnel in education, library, information, archive, health and human services in the principles and practices of information literacy and lifelong learning;
- inclusion of information literacy into initial and continuing education for key economic sectors and government policy making and administration, and into the practice of advisors to the business, industry and agriculture sectors;
- programs to increase the employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of women and the disadvantaged, including immigrants, the underemployed and the unemployed; and

- recognition of lifelong learning and information literacy as key elements for the development of generic capabilities which must be required for the accreditation of all education and training programs.

We affirm that vigorous investment in information literacy and lifelong learning strategies creates public value and is essential to the development of the Information Society.

Adopted in Alexandria, Egypt at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 9 November 2005.

Maintaining our digital memory: a declaration of support for the World Summit on the Information Society

Communiqué from the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL), Oslo, August 2005

The National Libraries of the world are the guardians of the cultural heritage expressed in a nation's documented memory which includes the digital information produced in the Information Society.

National Libraries in all countries have a mandate and duty to collect and preserve this digital cultural heritage and to make it accessible both now and to future generations.

It is a matter of the highest importance to the National Libraries of the world that all states develop coordinated national strategies for inclusive information societies in which our digital heritage will be preserved and made accessible with the same commitment already shown to our nations' printed records.

In the spirit of partnership and digital solidarity we, the Directors of the National Libraries of the world support the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, adopted in Geneva, December 2003, in particular those principles related to:

- Section A Our Common Vision of the Information Society
- Section B An Information Society for All
- Section C Towards an Information Society for All Based on Shared Knowledge

Furthermore we seek the endorsement of the Tunis meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society, November 2005, for the full implementation of these principles as well as the maintenance of our shared digital memory.