



Presentation of the report of President Ingrid Parent at the General Assembly of the 79th IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Singapore

Dear colleagues,

Well, it certainly has been a productive and busy year for me personally as IFLA President, for Headquarters staff, and for all our professional units within IFLA. A tremendous amount of work has been accomplished, and I would like to describe some of the Highlights to you.

If you don't know by now, my theme for the two years of my presidency was Libraries--A Force for Change. That was the message I promoted in all my various meetings with library associations and librarians around the world. But I also promoted it to decision makers as well, the governing authorities in various countries. And on the whole my message was well received.

I just want to point out the seven official languages for my theme, which are also on my business card [slide] I made a personal commitment to enhance IFLA's multilingual presence, and in the past year, the IFLA website was made available in Spanish and French. We have also increased the number of Simultaneous Interpretation sessions during the conference and hope to do more of this at future congresses.

I wish to sincerely thank the members of the IFLA Governing Board Languages Working Group, chaired by Barbara Lison, for sharing my vision of what is needed to enhance IFLA's multilingual capabilities. Many thanks also to the IFLA Web Manager from Headquarters, and to the many volunteer [slide] translators from many countries who translate and interpret not only during the conference but also throughout the year to ensure that IFLA standards, policies and guidelines are available in as many languages as possible. I sincerely hope you will continue this good work!

I find that much of the work accomplished this year relates to the thread of Connections, working with various partners on issues of common interest. So I will frame my report around the relationships IFLA has and continues to develop to ensure that we leverage opportunities and speak with a united voice across our professional communities.

I really must report first on the development and launch of the Trend Report. This resource and document which are now available to all IFLA members are the culmination of an entire year of planning, meeting, discussing and reflecting on what the information environment holds in store for libraries. To distill all the information that was gathered was a gargantuan task, but we succeeded in developing five high level trends [slide] in the information economy that will greatly affect those groups and institutions dealing with public knowledge, namely libraries. I have given presentations several times this week on the process and the content of the Trend Report.

And the response from library groups as well as from our strategic partners from other sectors has been very positive.

Now I would like to emphasize how important it is for you, IFLA members, to take the content and reflections culminating in this report and available to you on the IFLA website, and use all the opportunities at your disposal to get engaged and creative. So start thinking about ways to build on the Trend Report at the local, regional and national levels, in ways relevant to your specific library, your sector, your community. And most importantly, feed the outcomes of your discussions back to the website to continue to make the Trend Report a living document. You are steering the ship as we head into new Trend Report territory.

Thank you again to all who were involved in developing this ground-breaking resource which will be on IFLA's and all libraries' agenda for many years to come.

One of the major components of the Trend Report was the so-called Tent Meeting of ten experts from various sectors sharing their insights and future predictions last March in Mexico City. Directly following this meeting, I held my second President's meeting on the topic of "Our Digital Futures". Over 200 participants heard speakers from around the world describing the impact that digital technologies have on the delivery of library services and how the role of libraries was changing. The results of those discussions were also incorporated into the Trend Report. The first Presidents meeting I had in 2012 focused on Indigenous and traditional knowledge, the second one took us into the future with equally impressive results.

One of the most challenging and gratifying connections I made was with the Arab speaking regions of the world represented by the Arab Federation of Libraries and Information. [slide] This diverse and important group of countries had had a somewhat difficult relationship with IFLA over the 15 years, but with some creative and transformative thinking, with some open minded leaders on both sides, and with some generous funding support from the region, we were able to develop a new working relationship which culminated in the signing of an agreement this week covering several areas of cooperation, including translation opportunities, building strong library associations and support for copyright advocacy.

It is so important that IFLA represents the interests of all regions of the world and that libraries everywhere feel a sense of common purpose in belonging to an international federation. I am very grateful to AFLI for agreeing to this strategic partnership with IFLA.

And speaking of generous funding, a key ingredient for launching many projects, I would like to recognize the great support we have just received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. We recently announced that our Building Strong Library Associations programme will be expanded, [slide] with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through a series of meetings and projects at the regional level in Africa, Asia and Oceania, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

These regions have an emerging and growing demand for library services that can support their increasing needs in education, literacy, and access to electronic information services and delivery.

Our partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Global Libraries Initiative will accelerate the development of library associations which represent the interests of all library users and which will have a positive impact in their communities.

The nature of partnerships evolve over time. Which is perfectly normal. Sometimes a change in direction or support triggers a rethinking or review of practices and structures that have been in

place for a long time. And this relates to IFLA's core activities as well. Those of you who are veterans of IFLA may remember that IFLANet was hosted in the 1990's at the National Library of Canada until a more technological and accessible solution was found. A core activity that I remember well was the UBCIM program, the Universal Bibliographic Control and International MARC program. It was housed at Die Deutsche Bibliothek for many years until it evolved into a more general CDNL/IFLA activity and now has been integrated into general standards work coordinated by IFLA.

A few months ago we were advised that the Bibliotheque nationale de France will no longer host the International PAC Centre, the Preservation and Conservation International Centre after the end of December of this year. The BNF has done more than its share by hosting the PAC Centre for over twenty years. IFLA is very grateful to the BNF for its support of the Centre and for its support for IFLA activities in general.

We are now undertaking broad consultations with various stakeholders to see how best to coordinate all the structures and groups that focus on preservation and conservation activities within IFLA. The next Governing Board of IFLA will review the results of these consultations at the end of this year. In the meantime, after January 1, 2014, IFLA Headquarters staff will ensure that the preservation and conservation work within IFLA continues with no interruption.

Regarding another strategic partner for IFLA, I was really pleased to see how much more proactive the interactions and cooperation on joint projects and programs with CDNL, the Conference of Directors of National Libraries, have become over the past few years. The national libraries are key players within their countries in coordinating and promoting their libraries and in advocating with their governments to support library values and priorities in discussions at multilateral and international forums. They are increasingly committed to achieving the same objectives as IFLA, and yesterday at their annual meeting here in Singapore, they took an active role in providing their first reactions to the Trend Report.

At that meeting the Chair of CDNL, Mr John Tsebe, the Director of the National Library of South Africa, [slide] announced that he will retire at the end of February 2014. He has worked very hard to further the collaboration between CDNL and IFLA, something he believed in when we were both members of IFLA's Standing Committee on National Libraries. We wish him well for the future, and look forward to ongoing cooperation with CDNL.

And speaking of retirement, there is one retirement that will not happen that soon. [slide] I am pleased to let you know that the Governing Board has approved the extension of the contract of our Secretary General, Jennefer Nicholson, until the end of May 2016. Her original contract had indicated a departure date just after the Lyon conference next August. As a result the Governing Board had begun the process of recruiting a new Secretary General. However Jennefer's residency permit was extended by the Dutch government, and she has agreed to the extension. I am sure I can speak on behalf of all of us that we are very pleased and very fortunate to have such a capable leader and administrator as Jennefer with us for close to another three years. Thank you, Jennefer, for accepting this extension.

Our Secretary General, whom I still regard as utterly fearless, as well as the Headquarters staff, are in large part responsible for the tremendous progress that IFLA has made on so many fronts. Our federation is in good shape from so many perspectives, respected and emulated by many of our

peer associations around the world. I wish to thank the members of the governing bodies of IFLA for giving willingly of their time and energy to make IFLA a force for change, and my heartfelt appreciation goes to each and every one of you for being that positive force within your libraries and communities.

Thank you!

Ingrid Parent

IFLA President 2011-2013