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IFLA PAC Regional Centre Southern Africa Douwe Drijfhout National Library of South Africa Report 2013/2014

The IFLA PAC (Preservation and Conservation Core Activity) Regional Centre for Southern Africa at the National Library of South Africa (NLSA) was established in December 2012. A longstanding relationship with IFLA PAC since its establishment in Nairobi in 1984 resulted in many regional initiatives, research projects and training events in Africa. From 1992 to 2013 the PAC International Centre was hosted by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. A sincere word of thanks to IFLA PAC directors Marie Therese Varlamoff and Christiane Baryla for many years of support by way of managing the IFLA PAC Core Activity and publishing International Preservation News.

Under the leadership of retired National Librarian of South Africa Mr John Tsebe a Directory of National Libraries in Africa was completed and published by end 2013. It was encouraging to experience good responses to the latest round of requests to update information. The Directory is posted on the website of the NLSA. A listserv was established to facilitate communication between national libraries in Africa.

The NLSA continued to conduct preservation training in South Africa. Workshops were held in Potchefstroom (22 Nov 2013), Cape Town (19 March and 27 September 2014), Kimberley (8-11 April 2014), Port Elizabeth (2-5 September 2014), Richmond, Northern Cape (23-24 October 2014). A short course on Preservation Management was held at the University of the Western Cape (23-27 June 2014). Training covered topics ranging from preservation policies, climate control, de-acidification, digitisation, bookbinding, basic book repairs to disaster planning and pest management. Through the involvement of IFLA PAC we plan to extend similar training to other countries in Southern Africa.

Visitors from Africa included Ethiopia, Zambia, Swaziland, Burundi and Mali. Requests for information on internships and disaster recovery methods were received from Uganda, Swaziland and Tanzania. Information available on the Internet was collected to complete the IFLA questionnaire for a risk register on Documentary Heritage for Southern Africa. Copies of International Preservation News were distributed at SCECSAL (Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations) that took place in Malawi 28 July to 1 August 2014.

Specific recent preservation projects include the de-acidification of papers, books and archives in custody of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the digitisation of parts of Indian Opinion (newspaper published by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa), the digitisation of manuscript material from the David Livingston and Bleek and Lloyd collections housed at the NLSA Cape Town campus. Digitisation of newspapers from other African countries included Naledi ya Batswana (1960) and the Basotoland News (1935-1936).

Preparations for hosting sessions at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Cape Town in 2015 got well under way (in partnership with the Preservation and Conservation, Newspaper and Rare Books and Manuscripts Sections).