

COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

**Eighteenth Session
Geneva, 9 to 13 May 2016**

Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in 2015 to implement the outcome of the WSIS

Submission by

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 18th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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Annual WSIS reporting on Action Lines – International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Part One: Executive summary

IFLA has continued to support the implementation of WSIS outcomes specifically around action lines C3 and C8. In August 2014, IFLA launched the *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development* to underline and further support IFLA's engagement in the development of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹ During 2015 IFLA, together with its members and the 600 signatories of the *Lyon Declaration* advocated for the inclusion of access to information within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlighted throughout the negotiations process that access to information and knowledge (action line C3) is essential in order to realise the new *2030 Agenda*. The *Lyon Declaration* reached 600 signatories in the year since its launch.

At the same time, IFLA has engaged with *The Future we want includes Culture*² coalition/Declaration which calls for the importance of culture to realise a smooth and sustainable implementation of the *2030 Agenda*. The asks of the coalition are very much in line with action line C8 (cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content) in order to achieve the Goals set out in the SDGs.

IFLA has also continued its advocacy of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) skills which librarians can provide to their users in order to further their personal and professional development. Through drafting a principles statement³ for the Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries, this role for libraries has been highlighted in the multistakeholder environment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), and the concepts have been included in "Connecting the next billion."

Part Two: Analytical overview

In 2014, IFLA launched the *Lyon Declaration*⁴. The Declaration asks Member States of the United Nations to acknowledge that access to information, and the skills to use it effectively, are required for sustainable development, and ensure that this is recognised in the *2030 Agenda* by:

- a) Acknowledging the public's right to access information and data, while respecting the right to individual privacy.
- b) Recognising the important role of local authorities, information intermediaries and infrastructure such as ICTs and an open Internet as a means of implementation.
- c) Adopting policy, standards and legislation to ensure the continued funding, integrity, preservation and provision of information by governments, and access by people.

¹ <http://www.lyondeclaration.org/>

² <http://culture2015goal.net/>

³ <http://review.intgovforum.org/igf-2015/dynamic-coalitions/dynamic-coalition-on-public-access-in-libraries-dc-pal/>

⁴ <http://www.lyondeclaration.org/>

- d) Developing targets and indicators that enable measurement of the impact of access to information and data and reporting on progress during each year of the goals in a Development and Access to Information (DA2I) report.

The Declaration was launched to underline and further support IFLA's engagement in the development of the *2030 Agenda*. IFLA, together with its members and the signatories of the *Lyon Declaration* advocated for the inclusion of access to information within the SDGs and highlighted throughout the process that access to information and knowledge (action line C3) is essential in order to realise the new *2030 Agenda*.

IFLA also launched toolkit to support advocacy for access to information in national development plans⁵ which helps libraries to show that they make an important contribution to development.

At the same time, IFLA has engaged with *The Future We Want Includes Culture*⁶ coalition/Declaration which calls for the importance of culture to realise a smooth and sustainable implementation of the *2030 Agenda*. The asks of the coalition are very much in line with action line C8 and the importance of culture in order to achieve the Goals set out in the SDGs. The coalition succeeded in adding several references to culture to the SDGs, most notably Target 11.4 (*Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage*).

The world's 320,000 public libraries continue to provide public access points to information, knowledge, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and culture. Stakeholders in national and international policies need to continue to recognise the essential role libraries play in providing public access, developing people through skills training and capacity building, and preserving information and culture for future generations⁷.

In terms of obstacles, we would like to draw attention to IFLA's experiences during the negotiations around the *2030 Agenda* in New York during the period 2013-2015. IFLA participated in both the Open Working Group meetings and the Inter-Governmental Negotiations, and during these processes we were concerned at the lack of reference to, or awareness of, WSIS among all stakeholders, including governments. Substantial references to ICT for development during negotiations were rare, and even during special sessions on ICT WSIS was barely, if ever, mentioned. IFLA feels that the resulting ICT-related targets in the *2030 Agenda* suffered from this situation, and finds it strange that a UN process with ten years of experience and achievement was little discussed in the New York context. Often we found we were the only organisation present that had a connection between both WSIS and the post-2015 discussions – we did our best to give a positive impression of WSIS in this context.

Considering this, it is encouraging to see the emphasis placed on the new *2030 Agenda* within the WSIS Review meetings that IFLA has participated in in 2015. The initial documents

⁵ <http://www.ifla.org/node/9989?og=7409>

⁶ <http://culture2015goal.net/>

⁷ <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/next-4-billion-two-page.pdf>

discussed within the context of the review show a far greater awareness of the need to connect WSIS with the *2030 Agenda*, and this is an approach we very much support.

Part Three:

(a) Innovative policies etc.:

During 2015, IFLA has undertaken numerous efforts and activities to further the core messages of WSIS and its action lines.

IFLA has been engaged with the creation of the *2030 Agenda* since 2012. We have advocated for the inclusion of access to information (action line C3), access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (action line C2), the inclusion of Culture (action line C8) and literacy (action line C4). All these issues can now be found in the *2030 Agenda* and the accompanying SDGs. IFLA has achieved this through the help of stakeholder cooperation but also through pointed advocacy campaigns in form of Declarations which drew the UN's and their Member States attentions, namely the *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development*⁸ and *The Future We Want Includes Culture*⁹. Both Declarations call on the UN and their Member States to recognise the importance of access to information, access to ICTs and culture, respectively. These issues are closely linked to WSIS and were highlighted by the WSIS Action Line SDG matrix.

Now that the *2030 Agenda* has been endorsed by the UN General Assembly, IFLA is working with national library associations and individual libraries in countries world-wide to ensure that our advocacy aims, and the goals of WSIS, are represented in National Development Plans which are now being drafted. We believe that libraries must be used as partners and solutions for the issues presented and libraries are recognised in the National Development Plans in order to achieve the realisation of the SDGs on a national level. As was highlighted in the WSIS Action Line SDG matrix produced by the ITU, this would also have a direct beneficiary impact on the WSIS aims and outcomes.

Further to our engagement with the *2030 Agenda*, IFLA has also worked on the promotion of the UNESCO/IFLA Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Recommendation¹⁰. MIL skills are essential in order for people to process and use the information accessible to them, to engage with ICTs and to understand and develop their cultural potential. Libraries and Librarians provide the skills and environment to teach people and help them to develop their full potential through MIL skills.

IFLA has actively worked on promoting and raising awareness for the preservation, conservation and safeguarding of cultural content in all its form and expressions. We have achieved this by launching the Risk Register for documentary heritage¹¹ in 2015. The Risk Register collects information on documentary heritage collections in order to be able to

⁸ <http://www.lyondeclaration.org/>

⁹ <http://www.culture2015goal.net/index.php/home/declaration>

¹⁰ <http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-media-and-information-literacy-recommendations?og=81>

¹¹ www.ifla.org/risk-register

respond effectively if disaster strikes. This feeds into realising WSIS action line C8 and we continue our work with our Preservation and Conservation Centres¹² to further achieve aims set out in the action line.

(b) Future actions etc.:

IFLA will continue its dedicated engagement with WSIS and the IGF as we see great value in both the process and its multi-stakeholder approach to policy issues. IFLA coordinates the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries with EIFL and has facilitated the drafting of a statement of principles¹³ that was presented at IGF 2015. This principle statement continues our work to raise the issues of access to information and the role of libraries in the multistakeholder environment of IGF.

We will continue to highlight the importance of WSIS within and beyond our network and advocate strongly for its overall aims and especially action lines C3 and C8. IFLA will also continue to stress the importance of WSIS and its outcomes to the successful implementation of the *2030 Agenda*.

Specifically, IFLA remains involved in the process of finalising the formulation of indicators relevant to issues relating to action lines C2, C3 and C8 and the overall implementation of the *2030 Agenda* on an international level through the IAEG-SDGs process. We will also continue our national level advocacy to encourage our members to participate in National Development Plans so that that the outlined issues and libraries as public institutions which facilitate their realisation, are included. This will have a direct effect on the realisation of the WSIS aims as well and we see it therefore as a priority.

Through our Professional Units we will continue to build up our representation and policies around Media and Information Literacy skills and advocate for their importance for the meaningful usage of information. Libraries are public institutions which facilitate training and enable users to develop skills in these areas.

Lastly, IFLA will continue to stress the importance of one of our core missions and WSIS action line C8 – Culture. The preservation, conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, in both print and digital forms is essential for IFLA and its members, and library users worldwide. Modern technology, as well as the increasing variety of content formats, continues to challenge libraries. IFLA, with its members, is working constantly on issues such as digital preservation¹⁴, traditional preservation and safeguarding¹⁵ of cultural heritage in order to support communities, preserve traditional knowledge and support generation of and access to local content in the digital age. The role WSIS action line C8 plays in this is crucial, and must be recognised in the Review.

¹² www.ifla.org/pac

¹³ <http://review.intgovforum.org/igf-2015/dynamic-coalitions/dynamic-coalition-on-public-access-in-libraries-dc-pal/>

¹⁴ UNESCO PERSIST Project: <http://unesco.nl/digital-sustainability>

¹⁵ www.ifla.org/risk-register