



IFLA has been heavily involved in the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society, the first phase of which was held in Geneva, December 2003. The second phase will be held in Tunis, 16-18 November 2005.

IFLA/WSIS

IFLA MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES & REPORTS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS

ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN AND GEORGIA

Appeal to the Parliaments and Governments of Armenia Azerbaijan and Georgia:

- English [<http://www.gela.org.ge/private/eng/Tbilisi%20Declaration%20ENG.htm>]
 - Russian [<http://www.gela.org.ge/private/eng/tbilisideclRUS.htm>]
-

CANADA

- A submission to the Government of Canada by the Canadian Library Association (CLA) [http://www.cla.ca/issues/wsis_cla_submission.pdf]
 - CLA Meeting with Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Officials [http://www.cla.ca/issues/cla_dfait_meeting.pdf]
-

FINLAND

Seminar on WSIS and libraries

The Finnish Library Association, Library of Parliament / Finland and the public libraries of the Helsinki region will organise a one-day seminar "**Libraries for Active Citizenship - Global Perspectives**" on **13 September 2004**, followed by a two-day study trip to Finnish libraries (mainly public libraries) on **14-15 September**.

There are two main topics: libraries and WSIS, and co-operation between the memory institutions, museums, libraries and archives.

Among the speakers are Ms. Danielle Mincio, Vice President of the Swiss Library Association, Ms. Ellen Namhila, Director of the Namibia Library and

Information Service, and Ms. Tiiu Valm, member of the IFLA Governing Board, National Library of Estonia. The seminar will be opened by Ms. Tarja Cronberg, Member of the Finnish Parliament and the President of the Finnish Library Association.

The seminar is free of charge. Some of the participants are invited, and for those the study trip is chargeless as well. From others, we have to charge 50€ for the transportation.

Registrations before 1 September, 2004; for the registration form and more information: <http://www.fl.fi/wsisse0904.htm> [<http://www.fl.fi/wsisse0904.htm>]

Contacts to Tuula Haavisto [<mailto:tuulah@kaapeli.fi>] or to Sinikka Sipilä [<mailto:sinikkas@fla.fi>] .
Tuula Haavisto
coordinator of the seminar

ICELAND

Libraries to be represented in Icelandic delegation at WSIS

Information – the Icelandic Library and Information Science Association reports that they wrote last July to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education, Science and Culture to draw their attention to the importance of library services in the context of the WSIS. They sent them introductory material on IFLA and the proposals IFLA had made for amendments to the draft Declaration of Principles and the draft Action Plan. At the end of end August, the Icelandic participants at PrepCom2 were also sent the information as recommended at the IFLA Council meeting in Berlin.

In September, the Association was offered a place on the Icelandic delegation to WSIS. This offer was accepted and the President of the Association, Thórdís Thórarinsdóttir, will join the delegation.

A preparatory meeting was held in Iceland in October. The Minister of Education, Science and culture will represent Iceland at the Summit and will make a speech. At the meeting it was agreed that Iceland would not develop its own policy concerning WSIS, but will join with other European countries in formulating a common position.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Report from the Russian Library Association:
We have published the IFLA Council Resolution on WSIS in Russian in the Russian Library Association Bulletin (2003 #27).
Web-address (in Russian) - <http://www.rba.ru> [<http://www.rba.ru>]

We are also doing our best to explain the importance of the World Summit to our authorities and our national delegation members.

SRI LANKA

This is to inform you the activities carried out in Sri Lanka on the forthcoming WSIS.

1. A joint action committee was set up from the members of the Sri Lanka Library Association and the National Library of Sri Lanka
2. A communique was prepared on the WSIS and the importance of libraries in the Information Society. This paper has been used in the discussion with the relevant government officials and as a press release.
3. Nominated a librarian for the libraries@heart conference
4. Met the Secretary to the Ministry of Mass Communication who will be the leader of the Sri Lankan delegation to WSIS. We had a long discussion with him and he was very sympathetic towards our case. He promised to do whatever possible in the summit to stress the importance of libraries. He is scheduled to speak at one of the sessions of WSIS and has pledged to include a para on the importance of libraries in his speech. He wants us to meet him again before the summit and after libraries@heart conference.
5. We strive hard to include a librarian in the national delegation
6. Planing to have discussions with other national level stakeholders eg. Media, Telecom., IT professionals.

Upali Amarasiri, Director General, National Library of Sri Lanka

USA

For the past several months, I have been heavily involved in preparations for Phase One of the United Nations World summit on the Information Society (WSIS) which has just concluded in Geneva.

On November 3-4, I attended and was a moderator for an IFLA Preconference also held in Geneva called "*Libraries @the Heart of the Information Society.*" The event was attended by about 200 librarians and supporters from over 70 nations hosted by our Swiss library colleagues who arranged through the City of Geneva and their associations to cover expenses for more than 30 delegates from developing nations around the world.

Five Americans participated in the Preconference representing National library associations [http://www.ala.org/al_onlineTemplate.cfm?Section=American_Libraries&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=51484] .

They were: John W. Berry, American Library Association; Janice Lachance,

Special Libraries Association; Janis Johnston, American Association of Law Libraries; Gary Strong, Association of Research Libraries and Winston Tabb, Association of Research Libraries and ALA.

American delegates to the Pre-Conference fully supported the following IFLA statement developed at the November Pre-Conference:

Delegates from over 70 countries attending the IFLA/ World Summit Pre-Conference to the World Summit on the Information society, meeting in the Hall of the General Assembly of the United Nations in Geneva on the 3rd and 4th November 2003, call upon the nations of the world to:

Support and extend the existing global network of library and information services to make available and preserve knowledge and cultural heritage, to provide information access points and to develop the twenty-first century literacies essential for the realisation of the information society. High quality library and information services provide access to the information required by the communities they serve. A modest investment in them would quickly return significant dividends.

American associations conducted a two-hour meeting with some of the official U.S. Delegation to the World Summit on 2 December in the Washington, D.C. offices ALA to brief them on a range of issues and concerns on WSIS documents and unresolved issues from the perspective of several national library associations.

We were very pleased that **Dr. Robert S. Martin** [<http://www.ims.gov/whatsnew/current/120403.htm>] , Director of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), was an official member of the U.S. delegation to WSIS. In addition, **Dr. Joan Challinor** [<http://www.nclis.gov/libinter/infolitconf&meet/post-infolitconf&meet/statusreport.html>] , Acting Chairman of the U.S. National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS), **Marsha Semmel**, Director for Strategic Partnerships, IMLS and Dr, **Barbara Stein**, Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of North Texas who specializes in school library and media services, were also among 53 US. Representatives to WSIS.

The US delegation was led by **Kevin Moley**, Ambassador, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva and Ambassador David Gross, U.S. Coordinator, International Communications and Information Policy, Department of State.

Initial expectations were that about 6,000 would attend; in the end, the summit drew nearly twice that number from nearly every nation in the world; about 60 Heads of State attended, with several notable exceptions.

As of yesterday here is the breakout...

As of 12.11.2003	Number of Participants	Number of Entities Represented
---------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------------------

States	4580	176
International Organizations	223	50
UN Bodies	600	37
UN Agencies	330	13
Non-Governmental Organizations	3162	481
Business	504	97
Guests	462	
Media	948	618
TOTAL	10809	1472

The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted at the Summit. They can be found at <http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/index.asp>
[<http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/index.asp>]

These documents were the subject hundreds of hours of discussions and negotiations at five Preparatory Conferences (Prep Coms) held in Geneva since July 2002.

In addition to governments, many hundreds of NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) and 'civil society' groups contributed to the development of positions and texts of these two documents.

Among the most contentious issues, as you may have seen in the press were:

- human rights
- Internet governance
- Internet security
- Intellectual property, copyright and 'fair use' of digital objects and resources
- The role of national and international media in the evolving information age
- And developing a dynamic funding scheme to fund the WSIS' Plan of Action

Are these documents perfect? Of course not. Are there parts of the documents to which many have objections and concerns? There are. Do they represent some progress on the way to a more inclusive global information society? They do.

IFLA and many other NGOs worked very hard - and with considerable success - in getting language into these two documents that reflects the importance of libraries, museums and archives to a global information and knowledge society that seeks inclusiveness for all the world's peoples; fair and equitable access to information and knowledge; that seeks to 'bridge the global digital divide'

and respects and that reaffirms all parts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Special thanks to retiring IFLA Secretary General, Ross Shimmon, for his leadership in these efforts at the international level and to IMLS staff members Bob Martin, Marsha Semmel, and Nancy Weiss for getting libraries, museums and archives firmly and enthusiastically on the radar screen of the US delegates from dozens of government agencies.

IFLA's Ross Shimmon will prepare a report on the WSIS for a future issue of American Libraries.

The second phase of the UN WSIS is planned for November 2005 in Tunis.

US associations will continue to work on the many issues addressed at the summit with our IFLA colleagues and an expanding range of US government agencies, NGOs and civil society groups in the months between now and Phase 2 of the WSIS.

John W. Berry

Chair, International Relations Committee

Vice-President, Freedom to Read Foundation Board of Trustees and ALA Past President

Executive Director

NILRC: Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges

E-mail: jberry@nilrc.org [mailto:jberry@nilrc.org]

<http://www.nilrc.org> [http://www.nilrc.org]

Latest Revision: March 10, 2005

Copyright © International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

www.ifla.org [http://www.ifla.org]