



international
publishers
association



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

World publishers and librarians issue joint pledge to strive for universal access to information

Geneva and The Hague — The world bodies speaking for the publishing and library sectors, the IPA and IFLA, today pledge to find mechanisms for universal access to information, and to help national and international authorities to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals linked to literacy, education and reading.

In a joint statement issued today, the first UNESCO **International Day for Universal Access to Information**, the International Publishers Association (IPA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) declare:

Access to information should be universal. Yet some groups face particular challenges in accessing information, notably people who are refugees, disabled, living in poverty, or who speak minority languages. We will work together to find ways to ensure that people's personal circumstances do not create barriers to access.

The joint statement also celebrates the pivotal part played by libraries and publishers in providing the materials and environments that create and cultivate literacy, which is the key to access to information:

In order to realise the benefits of universal access to information, literacy is essential. Libraries and publishers perform decisive roles in developing the ability to read in the first place, and in promoting the media and information skills people need to truly benefit from what they read, hear, or see. We strongly welcome and support the UN Secretary-General's call for universal literacy by 2030.

IPA President Richard Charkin said: 'Access to information means having the car keys, and literacy means knowing how to drive it. For centuries, publishers and libraries have been proud contributors to the furtherance of world literacy and access to information. We have vital responsibilities in the development of reading and learning culture, and there is a natural symbiosis between the work of librarians and that of publishers. We're honoured to be a part of the newest UNESCO international day and to do even more to raise awareness of the importance of access to information.'

IFLA President Donna Scheeder said: 'The UN 2030 Agenda highlighted that access to information is necessary for progress across the range of development goals. The first International Day for Universal Access to Information reminds us that if the benefits of development are to be shared by all, everyone needs to have knowledge at their fingertips. Too many groups today are excluded from the information society. Libraries have long worked with publishers to give disadvantaged groups access, and look forward to finding ways to continue to do so.'