

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 and the second phase in Tunis, 16-18 November 2005.

Information Literacy for all

News Release
March 2006

The final report of the High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning -- www.ifla.org/files/assets/wsis/Documents/High-Level-Colloquium.pdf, held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, 6-9 November 2005, sponsored by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), was released on 1st March 2006.

Building on an earlier international meeting of experts which was held in Prague, the Czech Republic, in September 2003, the report challenges international, regional and national organizations to move beyond an exclusive focus and concern for "Information for All" to "Information Literacy for All."

The report argues that the existence of information holds little to no value to people who do not even know what information they need, much less whether it exists or not, or how to locate, evaluate and effectively use it.

According to Abdelaziz Abid, Senior Programme Specialist, Communications and Information Sector of UNESCO, "Information Literacy has become a global issue, and many Information Literacy initiatives are being documented throughout the world. Information Literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments and to all levels of education..." The report makes a strong case that information literacy is part of the basic right to lifelong learning, and that it is far more than a library or education issue. The report acknowledges that Information Literacy is context specific to particular cultures and societies, and finds it crucial to dealing with issues of economic development, health, citizenship, governance and quality of life. The report makes practical recommendations that seek to promote far greater social inclusion of all races, religions, ethnic groups and cultures within today's global Information Society.

The report is organized according to four primary areas related to Information Literacy: Education and Learning, Health and Human Services, Business and

Economic Development, and Governance and Citizenship. It highlights recommendations for empowering citizens across the globe to be information literate. The report also describes numerous activities, strategies and approaches to promote cooperation between governments, NGOs, elements of the Civil Society, and international organizations, as well as opportunities for implementation and future plans.

The three major organizers of the High-Level Colloquium were:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which is the international lead agency for education, the sciences, and culture.
For more information, go to www.unesco.org.
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), which is the leading international NGO body representing the interests of library and information services and their users.
- The National Forum on Information Literacy (NFIL), which is an U.S. based umbrella group of over 90 organizations from education, business, government and community service, plus international organizations. All are committed to the empowerment of individuals in today's information society. Combined membership in the Forum member organizations totals over 5,000,000.
For more information, go to www.infolit.org.

Contributions to the meeting were also made by the:

Bibliotheca Alexandrina -- www.bibalex.org -- and its Director, Dr. Ismail Serageldin, Diane and Lee Brandenburg of California, USA, Information Today, Inc., and the

U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) -- www.nclis.gov

 **The final report of the High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning** -- <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/ws/Docs/High-Level-Colloquium.pdf>

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Latest Revision: 6 March 2006

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