

Libraries@the Heart of the Information Society

IFLA Issues from World Summit 10-12 December 2003

Nr. 2

Wednesday, 10th of December, is the International Day of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Opening Day of the World Summit. **UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan** -- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/3307673.stm> -- welcomed Heads of States, delegates and participants with these words: "*We are going through a historic transformation in the way we live, learn, work, communicate and do business. We must do so not passively, but as makers of our own destiny. Technology has produced the information age. Now it is up to all of us to build an information society.*"

The World Summit opened in an optimistic atmosphere, as the draft texts of the Declaration of Principles and the Action Plan -- <http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/listing-all-en-s1.asp> -- now were presented without brackets. This means that the basic text can be adopted on Friday.

Good news for the library field: the efforts of IFLA and many colleagues in national library associations have resulted in final texts in which libraries are mentioned. This will provide a useful basis for follow up actions for the second part of the World Summit in Tunis 2005.

- IFLA's main session took place Wednesday afternoon, with a range of presentations by Kay Raseroka (IFLA president), Alex Byrne (IFLA president-elect), Genevieve Clavel-Morrin (National Library of Switzerland), Sinikka Sipilä (Finnish Library Association) and Sjoerd Koopman (IFLA Headquarters) on various topics. Swiss colleagues brought in leaflets and the recent publication on the IFLA Pre-Summit Conference. We had our doubts about how many people would find their way to our room and would be interested in libraries, as it coincided with the Official Opening and so many other programmes. Fortunately, about 100 participants attended and came up with interesting questions as an input to a lively debate.
- IFLA was also present at the session organized by the Swiss UNESCO Commission: "Content Professionals Bridging the Digital Divide". This cooperation of scientists, journalists, archivists and librarians in many different countries demonstrates the need to form partnerships outside our traditional field. Charles Batambuze (secretary-general of the Uganda Library Association) showed the bookmobile project with printing on demand, thus demonstrating the creative use of ICT in library services.
- In the UNESCO programme on Cultural Diversity, Marianne Scott (past chair of CLM, Canada) spoke on the difficult copyright issue from the point of view of libraries and library users. She was a good match to Hugh Jones from the Copyright Council to the Publishers Association, striking the fine balance between the right holders and the legitimate rights of users.
- In the evening we went to the City Library of Geneva, where Swiss colleagues had organised a public lecture on the miracles of new technology and our imagination. Kay Raseroka took the opportunity to thank the Swiss library community for their enormous

efforts and dedication to library advocacy at the World Summit.

Marian Koren (Member of IFLA Governing Board, Netherlands Public Library Association)

Winnie Vitzansky (Standing Committee Member of the IFLA Section on Management of Library Associations, Director of the Danish Library Association)

Read more:

- www.itu.int/wsis/geneva/newsroom/press_releases/wsisopen.html -- Yoshio Utsumi, ITU Secretary-General Opens First Global Information Summit
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/3306767.stm> -- Tim Berners-Lee, Head of the World Wide Web Consortium, opens digital divide summit

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