Promoting the global information commons: A commentary on the library and information implications of the WSIS Declaration of Principles "Building the information society: a global challenge in the new millennium"

(Document WSIS/PC-3/DT/6)

A. Our Common Vision of the Information Society

1. **We, the representatives of the peoples of the world**, **assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society,** declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- IFLA and its members share a common vision of an inclusive Information Society in which everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge and which is based on the fundamental right of human beings both to access and to express information without restriction.

2. **Our challenge** is to harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration, namely the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and development of global partnerships for development for the attainment of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. We also reiterate our commitment to the achievement of sustainable development and agreed development goals, as contained in the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus, and other outcomes of relevant UN Summits.

- The worldwide network of libraries and information services provides the information which will enable these crucial global goals to be achieved.

3.   **We reaffirm** the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, as enshrined in the Vienna Declaration. We also reaffirm that democracy, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. We further resolve to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs.

4.   **We reaffirm,** as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. It is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers.

- In the *Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom*, IFLA and its members have declared that:

- *IFLA proclaims the fundamental right of human beings both to access and to express information without restriction.*

- *IFLA and its worldwide membership support, defend and promote intellectual freedom as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This intellectual freedom encompasses the wealth of human knowledge, opinion, creative thought and intellectual activity.*

- *IFLA asserts that a commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility of the library and information profession worldwide, expressed through codes of ethics and demonstrated through practice.*

5.   **We further reaffirm** our commitment to the provisions of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible, and that, in the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this way, we shall promote an Information Society where human dignity is respected.

6.   In keeping with the spirit of this declaration, **we rededicate ourselves** to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

- In the *Glasgow Declaration*, IFLA affirms that:

- *Libraries and information services contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights. Consequently, they are committed to offering their clients access to relevant resources and services without restriction and to opposing any form of censorship.*

7.   **We recognize that science** ha**s** a central role in the development of the Information Society. Many of the building blocks of the Information Society are the result of scientific and technical advances made possible by the sharing of research results.

8.   **We recognize** that education, knowledge, information and communication are at the core of human progress, endeavour and well-being. Further, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have an immense impact on virtually all aspects of our lives. The rapid progress of these technologies opens completely new opportunities to attain higher levels of development. The capacity of these technologies to reduce many traditional obstacles, especially those of time and distance, for the first time in history makes it possible to use the potential of these technologies for the benefit of millions of people in all corners of the world.

- In the *Glasgow Declaration*, IFLA affirms that:

- *Libraries and information services provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination in any medium and regardless of frontiers. They serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture, offering essential support for independent decision-making, cultural development, research and lifelong learning by both individuals and groups.*

9.   **We are aware** that ICTs should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves. Under favourable conditions, these technologies can be a powerful instrument, increasing productivity, generating economic growth, job creation and employability and improving the quality of life of all. They can also promote dialogue among people, nations and civilizations.

- The worldwide network of libraries and information services offers access points with support and training for effective use of ICTs.
- In their early adoption of many ICTs, libraries and information services have recognised that they should be regarded as tools and not as an end in themselves.
- International understanding and dialogue is supported through access to information and knowledge from other nations and cultures.

10. **We are also fully aware** that the benefits of the information technology revolution are today unevenly distributed between the developed and developing countries and within societies. We are fully committed to turning this digital divide into a digital opportunity for all, particularly for those who risk being left behind and being further marginalized.

- IFLA and its members are committed to addressing the digital divide and the information inequality that results from it. A continuing but relatively modest investment in international collaboration between library and information organisations and IFLA's Advancement of Librarianship Program (ALP) would significantly improve access to information across societies.

11. **We are committed** to realising our common vision of the Information Society for ourselves and for future generations**.** We recognize that young people are the future workforce and leading creators and earliest adopters of ICTs. They must therefore be empowered as learners, developers, contributors, entrepreneurs and decision-makers. We must focus especially on young people who have not yet been able to benefit fully from the opportunities provided by ICTs. We are also committed to ensuring that the development of ICT applications and operation of services respects the rights of children as well as their protection and well-being.

- "Lifelong literacy" is the theme of the current IFLA President, Kay Raseroka. It emphasises the role and responsibility of libraries to assist all people, and especially children and young people, to develop the range of competencies necessary to engage fully with the Information Society.
- The special role of school libraries has been delineated in the *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto: The school library in teaching and learning for all.*

- In addition, libraries and information services look both backwards and forewords to deliver the knowledge and wisdom of the ages and to secure current and future information for the benefit of all.

12. **We affirm** that development of ICTs provides enormous opportunities for women, who should be an integral part of, and key actors, in the Information Society. We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis on equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end.

- Libraries and information services offer secure environments in which women and girls can obtain the information to take control of their lives and influence their societies.
- Non discriminatory employment in libraries and information services provides career opportunities for women, many of whom have attained positions of leadership.

13. In building the Information Society, **we shall pay particular attention** to the special needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of society, including migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, unemployed and under-privileged people, minorities and nomadic people. We shall also recognize the special needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.

- The *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* emphasises the broad role of libraries in supporting all members of society.
- Many libraries have specific programs tailored to the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable; others are specifically designed to meet the special needs of some groups, such as the libraries for the blind.

14. **We are resolute** to empower the poor, particularly those living in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas, to access information and to use ICTs as a tool to support their efforts to lift themselves out of poverty.

- The principle that libraries should be open to all is at the core of librarianship and has been promulgated through the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.*
- Many library services employ special means to provide services to remote, rural and marginalized urban areas. They include mobile libraries – which range from special designed buses to the camel library services in Kenya – and the very successful services for the urban poor operated by such organisations as Biblored in Colombia.

15. In the evolution of the Information Society, particular attention must be given to the special situation of indigenous peoples, as well as to the preservation of their heritage and their cultural legacy.

- IFLA endorsed a *Statement on indigenous traditional knowledge* in 2003.
- Library services such as those operated by the State Library of Queensland in Australia respond to the particular needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples.

16. **We continue to pay** special attention to the particular needs of people of developing countries, countries with economies in transition, Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries, Highly Indebted Poor Countries, countries and territories under occupation, countries recovering from conflict and countries and regions with special needs as well as to conditions that pose severe threats to development, such as natural disasters.

- The IFLA Advancement of Librarianship Program (ALP) promotes improvements to library and information service in developing countries.

- The IFLA Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) program promotes unrestricted access to information and defends intellectual freedom worldwide, drawing attention to abrogations of those rights.
- The International Committee of the Blue Shield works to protect cultural property in the event of natural and human disasters. It comprises representatives of the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

17. **We recognize** that building an inclusive Information Society requires new forms of solidarity, partnership and cooperation among governments and other stakeholders, i.e. the private sector, civil society and international organizations. Realizing that the ambitious goal of this Declaration—bridging the digital divide and ensuring harmonious, fair and equitable development for all—will require strong commitment by all stakeholders, we call for digital solidarity, both at national and international levels.

18.   Nothing in this declaration shall be construed as impairing, contradicting, restricting or derogating from the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any other international instrument or national laws adopted in furtherance of these instruments.

- IFLA is an independent, international, non-governmental organisation representing the interest of libraries, librarians and the users of libraries worldwide. Founded in 1927, it now has members in over 150 countries, representing hundreds of thousand of library and information staff. IFLA is accredited by a number of United Nations agencies, including UNESCO with whom it enjoys Formal Associate Relations.

- IFLA and its worldwide membership support, defend and promote intellectual freedom as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This intellectual freedom encompasses the wealth of human knowledge, opinion, creative thought and intellectual activity.

B. An information Society for all: key principles

19. **We are resolute** in our quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer. We agree that to meet these challenges, all stakeholders should work together to: improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge; build capacity; increase confidence and security in the use of ICTs; create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen ICT applications; foster and respect cultural diversity; recognize the role of the media; address the ethical dimensions of the Information Society; and encourage international and regional cooperation. We agree that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information Society.

- Libraries and information services are vital enabling organisations which provide both technological and human resources to foster the building of an inclusive Information Society.

1)   The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

20.   Governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organizations have an important role and responsibility in the development of the Information Society and, as appropriate, in decision-making processes. Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders.

- As community resources, libraries – and especially national, public, school and university libraries – are an expression of the aspirations of civil society. They reflect and respond to the interests and hopes of community members.
- Many libraries are supported by government and provide vital mechanisms to access government information and to support digital democracy. They enable informed participation in decision making.
- In addition, many libraries and information services support business, industry and economic development by providing the essential information to guide planning, implementation and analysis of the consequences of development.

2)   Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society

21.   Connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the Information Society. Universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICT infrastructure and services, constitutes one of the challenges of the Information Society and should be an objective of all stakeholders involved in building it. Connectivity also involves access to energy and postal services, which should be assured in conformity with the domestic legislation of each country.

22.   A well-developed information and communication network infrastructure and applications, adapted to regional, national and local conditions, easily-accessible and affordable, and making greater use of broadband and other innovative technologies where possible, can accelerate the social and economic progress of countries, and the well-being of all individuals, communities and peoples.

23.   Policies that create a favourable climate for stability, predictability and fair competition at all levels should be developed and implemented in a manner that not only attracts more private investment for ICT infrastructure development but also enables universal service obligations to be met in areas where traditional market conditions fail to work. In disadvantaged areas, the establishment of ICT public access points in places such as post offices, schools, libraries and archives, can provide effective means for ensuring universal access to the infrastructure and services of the Information Society.

- Throughout the world, libraries and information services provide access points to the Internet for members of communities extending from the users of the National Library of Angola the privileged researchers in the home of the World Wide Web in CERN in Switzerland. Libraries not only provide ICTs but also the support and skills development which are so essential to effective use of the infrastructure and consequently to achieving empowerment.

3)   Access to information and knowledge

24.   The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.

- This is the key to creating a globally inclusive information society: the ability for all to express their dreams, ideas and opinions and to take in those of others, across geographical, cultural, linguistic and political barriers. By enabling access to information in all formats across such frontiers, and through time, libraries and information services foster understanding and communication.

25.   The sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development can be enhanced by removing barriers to equitable access to information for economic, social, political, health, cultural, educational, and scientific activities and by facilitating access to public domain information, including by universal design and the use of assistive technologies.

- IFLA and its members are working to remove the barriers to accessing information for all human purposes. The IFLA Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters, in particular, endeavours to ensure that the interests of creators and users are both maintained in a balance which will ensure the widest possible access to information.

26. A rich public domain is an essential element for the growth of the Information Society, creating multiple benefits such as an educated public, new jobs, innovation, business opportunities, and the advancement of sciences. Information in the public domain should be easily accessible to support the Information Society, and protected from misappropriation. Public institutions such as libraries and archives, museums, cultural collections and other community-based access points should be strengthened so as to promote the preservation of documentary records and free and equitable access to information.

- As memory institutions, libraries and information services – and their counterparts in museums, archives and other cultural institutions – keep alive the knowledge of the past and preserve its manifestations for the users of the present and the future.
- In order to ensure the widest possible access while maintaining the interests of creators, IFLA and its members work to ensure the protection of the public domain and the inclusion of provisions for fair use in intellectual property regulation.

27. Access to information and knowledge can be promoted by increasing awareness among all stakeholders of the possibilities offered by different software models, including proprietary, open-source and free software, in order to increase competition, access by users, diversity of choice, and to enable all users to develop solutions which best meet their requirements. Affordable access to software should be considered as an important component of a truly inclusive Information Society.

- Many libraries have been early adopters of innovative software and have used their procurement policies to encourage the use of standards, open source approaches, equitable licence provisions and affordable pricing.

28. We strive to promote universal access with equal opportunities for all to scientific knowledge and the creation and dissemination of scientific and technical information, including open access initiatives for scientific publishing.

- Libraries and their associations, including IFLA, were among the first to draw attention to unaffordable pricing and restrictive licence provisions for scientific and technical information and to advance more equitable policies.
- IFLA endorsed a *Statement on open access to scholarly information and research documentation* in 2003.
- Many libraries are supporting open access initiatives by supporting the creation or purchase of open access publications and by promoting alternative models to researchers and scholars.

4) Capacity building

29. Each person should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from, the Information Society and the knowledge economy. Literacy and universal primary education are key factors for building a fully inclusive information society, paying particular attention to the special needs of girls and women. Given the wide range of ICT and information specialists required at all levels, building institutional capacity deserves special attention.

- "Lifelong literacy" is the theme of the current IFLA President, Kay Raseroka. It emphasises the role and responsibility of libraries to assist children and young people to develop the range of competencies necessary to engage fully with the Information Society. Libraries and information services provide secure, professionally supported, environments in which the literacies can be developed.
- Library associations in a number of countries have developed and adopted information literacy standards which guide the development of sound skills.

30.   The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

31.   Continuous and adult education, re-training, life-long learning, distance-learning and other special services, such as telemedicine, can make an essential contribution to employability and help people benefit from the new opportunities offered by ICTs for traditional jobs, self-employment and new professions. Awareness and literacy in ICTs are an essential foundation in this regard.

- Libraries and information services often introduce learners to ICTs and their use in seeking and using information at all levels of education and training, from the school library introducing a child to her first book to a research institute's information centre assisting a researcher to source urgently required data. Many offer special programs for clients with special needs, including the disabled.

32.   Content creators, publishers, and producers, as well as teachers, trainers, archivists, librarians and learners, should play an active role in promoting the Information Society, particularly in the Least Developed Countries.

- IFLA, its member associations, libraries and individual information professionals have long promoted the Information Society and worked for its realisation with a special concern for the disadvantaged both across and within nations.

33.   To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced. Furthermore, partnerships, in particular between and among developed and developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, in research and development, technology transfer, manufacturing and utilisation of ICT products and services are crucial for promoting capacity building and global participation in the Information Society. The manufacture of ICTs presents a significant opportunity for creation of wealth.

34.   The attainment of our shared aspirations, in particular for developing countries, including countries with economies in transition, to become fully-fledged members of the Information Society, and their positive integration into the knowledge economy, depends largely on increased capacity building in the areas of education, technology know-how and access to information, which are major factors in determining development and competitiveness.

- There is no need to 'reinvent the wheel' by creating new institutions: the existing worldwide network of libraries and information services provide the essential foundations for capacity building. They not only provide access to the information needed for education and development but the basis for developing skills, creating opportunities and encouraging inclusiveness.

5)   Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

35.   Strengthening the trust framework, including information security and network security, authentication, privacy and consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development of the

Information Society and for building confidence among users of ICTs. A global culture of cyber-security needs to be promoted, developed and implemented in co-operation with all stakeholders and international expert bodies. These efforts should be supported by increased international co-operation. Within this global culture of cyber-security, it is important to enhance security and to ensure the protection of data and privacy, while enhancing access and trade. In addition, it must take into account the level of social and economic development of each country and respect the development-oriented aspects of the Information Society.

36.   While recognizing the principles of universal and non-discriminatory access to ICTs for all nations, we support the activities of the United Nations to prevent the potential use of ICTs for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security. It is necessary to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal and terrorist purposes, while respecting human rights.

37.   Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.

- Secure and reliable communications are essential to equitable access to information but it is vital that measures taken to "strengthen the trust framework" and to promote "a global culture of cyber-security" do not smother the precious right of freedom of access to information and of expression.
- Trust and confidence between peoples and nations are maintained only in climate of understanding which is established through knowledge about others: they cannot be achieved in a climate of fear, restriction and misinformation. As IFLA noted in a statement just after the attacks of September 11, 2001: "The campaign against terrorism is to be won. A vital strategy is to safeguard the best access to information. Barriers to the free flow of information should be removed, especially those that promote inequality, poverty and despair. … That openness is a safeguard of our freedoms. It cannot be limited without endangering those freedoms".

6)   Enabling environment

38.   An enabling environment at national and international levels is essential for the Information Society. ICTs should be used as an important tool for good governance.

39.   The rule of law, accompanied by a supportive, transparent, pro-competitive, technologically neutral and predictable policy and regulatory framework reflecting national realities, is essential for building a people-centred Information Society. Governments should intervene, as appropriate, to correct market failures, to maintain fair competition, to attract investment, to enhance the development of the ICT infrastructure and applications, to maximize economic and social benefits, and to serve national priorities.

40.   A dynamic and enabling international environment, supportive of foreign direct investment, transfer of technology, and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of finance, debt and trade, as well as full and effective participation of developing countries in global decision-making, are vital complements to national development efforts related to ICTs. Improving global affordable connectivity would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of these development efforts.

41.   ICTs are an important enabler of growth through efficiency gains and increased productivity, in particular by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). In this regard, the development of the Information Society is important for broadly-based economic growth in both developed and developing economies. ICT-supported productivity gains and applied innovations across economic sectors should be fostered. Equitable distribution of the benefits contributes to poverty eradication and

social development. Policies that foster productive investment and enable firms, notably SMEs, to make the changes needed to seize the benefits from ICTs, are likely to be the most beneficial.

- Through their responsibility to serve all the members of their communities, including the disadvantaged and remote, libraries and information services are aware that market mechanisms do not always create an enabling environment in which all people may achieve their potential. While embracing the benefits which have been achieved through competition, IFLA advocates a global information commons through which all people will be enabled to seek and impart information.
- The global information commons requires, at a minimum, ubiquitous access to sufficient affordable bandwidth, up to date and affordable ICTs, unrestricted multilingual access to information and skills development programs to enable all to both access information and disseminate their own.

42.   Intellectual Property protection is important to encourage innovation and creativity in the information society; similarly, the wide dissemination, diffusion, and sharing of knowledge is important to encourage innovation and creativity. Facilitating meaningful participation by all in intellectual property issues and knowledge sharing through full awareness and capacity building is a fundamental part of an inclusive Information Society.

- The IFLA Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters works to ensure that the interests of creators and users are maintained in a balance which will ensure the widest possible access to information.

43.   Sustainable development can best be advanced in the Information Society when ICT-related efforts and programmes are fully integrated in national and regional development strategies. We welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of this initiative as well as those belonging to similar efforts in other regions. Distribution of the benefits of ICT-driven growth contributes to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

- Libraries and information services provide the information to guide sustainable development in their own regions and house the documentation through which ecological and other challenges may be studied.

44.   Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. There should be particular emphasis on the development and adoption of international standards. The development and use of open, interoperable, non-discriminatory and demand-driven standards that take into account needs of users and consumers is a basic element for the development and greater diffusion of ICTs and more affordable access to them, particularly in developing countries. International standards aim to create an environment where consumers can access services worldwide regardless of underlying technology.

- With the adoption of the Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) standard in the 1960s and earlier rules for describing documents, libraries demonstrated their strong commitment to standards based solutions to their own professional questions. This continues today, enabling worldwide sharing of the documentary record and data describing the documents.
- In addition, libraries and information services provide ready access to the standards which underlie modern technological and economic development.

45.   The radio frequency spectrum should be managed in the public interest and in accordance with principle of legality, with full observance of national laws and regulation as well as relevant international agreements.

46.   In building the Information Society, States are strongly urged to take steps with a view to the avoidance of, and refrain from, any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, and that hinders the well-being of their population.

- The principle of "information for all", which underpins library and information service, is based upon a commitment to equity. In accordance with the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto,* services are offered to all members of society to support the full achievement of their economic and social development.

47.   Recognizing that ICTs are progressively changing our working practices, the creation of a secure, safe and healthy working environment, appropriate to the utilisation of ICTs, respecting all relevant international norms, is fundamental.

- Libraries and information services seek to offer secure, safe and healthy working environments to their staff members and clients and also provide the information require by others to create and regulate suitable environments.

48.   The Internet has evolved into a global facility available to the public and its governance should constitute a core issue of the Information Society agenda. The international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations. It should ensure an equitable distribution of resources, facilitate access for all and ensure a stable and secure functioning of the Internet, taking into account multilingualism.

- As important civil society organisations which represent the broad interests of members of societies, libraries and information services advocate multilateral, transparent and democratic Internet governance and management.

49.   The management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations. In this respect it is recognized that:

a.   policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues;
b.   the private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;
c.   civil society has also played an important role on Internet matters, especially at community level, and should continue to play such a role;
d.   intergovernmental organizations have had and should continue to have a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues;
e.   international organizations have also had and should continue to have an important role in the development of Internet-related technical standards and relevant policies.

- As the international professional association concerned with information and library services, IFLA is concerned that Internet governance and management should facilitate unrestricted access to information and freedom of expression and should enable social and economic development and cultural creation by and for all the peoples of the world. IFLA opposes any measures which would lead to control of information access and free expression by commercial, governmental or sectoral interests.

50.   International Internet governance issues should be addressed in a coordinated manner. We ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a working group on Internet governance, in an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments,

the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums, to investigate and make proposals for action, as appropriate, on the governance of Internet by 2005.

- IFLA expects that its voice should be heard in regard to the consideration of Internet governance since it speaks on behalf of 2.5 billion registered library users across the world.

7) ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life

51. The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. ICT applications are potentially important in government operations and services, health care and health information, education and training, employment, job creation, business, agriculture, transport, protection of environment and management of natural resources, disaster prevention, and culture, and to promote eradication of poverty and other agreed development goals. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns and reduce traditional barriers, providing an opportunity for all to access local and global markets in a more equitable manner. Applications should be user-friendly, accessible to all, affordable, adapted to local needs in languages and cultures, and support sustainable development. To this effect, local authorities should play a major role in the provision of ICT services for the benefit of their populations.

- Through their accessibility within communities, libraries and information services provide ideal arenas in which ICTs can be deployed and employed to benefit their communities. Staff in the libraries and information services can assist clients to use the ICTs and to adapt them to their own needs. They provide a means of bringing the global power of the Internet into the local needs of people.
- Libraries, which already respond to the differing cultural and linguistic needs of their communities, are well placed to assist groups to develop applications and content in their own languages.
- Public libraries, which are generally supported by local authorities, offer a window into the global exchange of ideas, opinions and visions. Strong support from local authorities for their libraries can enhance the quality of life, foster cultural expression and stimulate economic activity in the locality.

8) Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

52. Cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind. The Information Society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents including UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, will further enrich the Information Society.

- Libraries and information services work in many ways and at many levels to exhibit and support cultural and linguistic identity and diversity. They not only make available information which records and illustrates that diversity but often host activities which celebrate and promote it.
- Libraries and information services provide documentation of traditional and contemporary cultural expression within the communities from which it comes and in other communities world wide. This encourages understanding between and societies across cultures.
- Demonstration of cultural diversity through library holdings and programs is particularly important in societies and nations with rich migrant traditions: it promotes social harmony by fostering mutual respect and tolerance between host and settler communities.

- Support for cultural and linguistic diversity in libraries is also important to indigenous communities because it can reinforce pride in their traditions and help make them available to other members of their societies.

53.　　The creation, dissemination and preservation of content in diverse languages and formats must be accorded high priority in building an inclusive Information Society, paying particular attention to the diversity of supply of creative work and due recognition of the rights of authors and artists. It is essential to promote the production of and accessibility to all content—educational, scientific, cultural or recreational—in diverse languages and formats. The development of local content suited to domestic or regional needs will encourage social and economic development and will stimulate participation of all stakeholders, including people living in rural, remote and marginal areas.

- Libraries, archives and information services are vital elements of the dissemination and preservation of content. Through their global network they make the wisdom of the ages and the knowledge of all—educational, scientific, cultural or recreational—available to people throughout the world in appropriate formats.
- Libraries also assist the creation of content by promoting writing and providing avenues for marginalised peoples to express their traditions and views. While this has been done in various media, the World Wide Web has provided a very accessible medium which has been rapidly adopted by many groups, including indigenous peoples, and often facilitated via libraries.
- A modest investment in the global library and information network would return enormous dividends by making content more readily available in a multiplicity of languages and formats, especially in developing countries.

54.　　The preservation of cultural heritage is a crucial component of identity and self–understanding of individuals that links a community to its past. The Information Society should harness and preserve cultural heritage for the future by all appropriate methods, including digitisation.

- Preservation of cultural heritage is core business for societies' memory institutions: libraries, archives and museums. It carries knowledge and traditions across time and space.
- Through its Preservation and Conservation (PAC) Core Activity, IFLA promotes high standards in preservation practice and engages with contemporary issues including the challenges posed by both preservation through digitisation and the preservation of digital objects.

9)　　Media

55.　　We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills.

- Through its strong endorsement of the *Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom* and its Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Core Activity, IFLA has affirmed its commitment to the principles of

freedom of expression and freedom of information. It works to ensure the widest possible access to information across the Information Society.

- The presentation of a plurality of news, entertainment, scholarly and other media via libraries and information services supports the diversity of media and helps sustain an informed and engaged audience.

10) Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

56. The Information Society should respect peace and uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, and respect for nature.

- The fundamental principle of the public library, that it should be open to all, underpins the strong ethical stance of library and information professionals who embrace the fundamental values of the Information Society.
- IFLA works with library associations to promote high ethical standards and presents, on its website, a range of codes of ethics for library and information practice drawn from associations around the world.

57. We acknowledge the importance of ethics for the Information Society, which should foster justice, and the dignity and worth of the human person. The widest possible protection should be accorded to the family and to enable it to play its crucial role in society.

- Through their strong commitment to meet the needs of individual clients and the communities they serve, libraries and information services emphasise the dignity and worth of all peoples. Services to the remote and housebound, disabled, aged, young and infant respond to the special needs of individuals, families and communities.

58. The use of ICTs and content creation should respect human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, including personal privacy, and the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in conformity with relevant international instruments.

- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is at the heart of the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*. It is exhibited through the accessibility of libraries to all and their provision of the broadest possible range of information.
- Libraries and information services take great care to respect the privacy of clients, implementing policies which aim to ensure that they do not fear that their freedom of thought, conscience, and religion and right to know is not inhibited through any fear of surveillance.

59. All actors in the Information Society should take appropriate actions and preventive measures, as determined by law, against abusive uses of ICTs, such as illegal and other acts motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, hatred, violence, all forms of child abuse, including paedophilia and child pornography, and trafficking in, and exploitation of, human beings.

- As agents of tolerant and inclusive civil societies, libraries and information services, and their global representative IFLA, oppose exploitative, abusive and illegal use of ICTs but are concerned that any regulatory measures should not compromise the precious rights of freedom of information and freedom of expression.

11) International and regional cooperation

60. We aim at making full use of the opportunities offered by ICTs in our efforts to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

and to uphold the key principles set forth in this Declaration. The Information Society is intrinsically global in nature and national efforts need to be supported by effective international and regional co-operation among governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, including the international financial institutions.

- IFLA is the global voice of the library and information profession which promotes collaboration in the provision of library and information services worldwide. IFLA is an independent, international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. Our aims are to promote high standards of provision and delivery of library and information services, encourage widespread understanding of the value of good library and information services, and represent the interests of our members throughout the world

61.   In order to build an inclusive global Information Society, we will seek and effectively implement concrete international approaches and mechanisms, including financial and technical assistance. Therefore, while appreciating ongoing ICT cooperation through various mechanisms, we invite all stakeholders to commit to the "Digital Solidarity Agenda" set forth in the Plan of Action. We are convinced that the worldwide agreed objective is to contribute to bridge the digital divide, promote access to ICTs, create digital opportunities, and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development. We recognize the will expressed on the one hand by some to create an international voluntary "Digital Solidarity Fund", and by others to undertake studies concerning existing mechanisms and the efficiency and feasibility of such a Fund.

- While not taking a position on specific funding mechanisms, IFLA is very conscious of the need to take urgent and decisive action to bridge the digital divide. Library and information specialists are in the frontline in trying to counter the growing information inequality which drives from the imbalance in ICTs and is multiplied by the problems of language, literacy and poverty. There is an urgent need for investment in infrastructure, technical support, initiatives to develop local content, and training and support for users, especially in developing countries. Investment in the existing library and information network will provide a multiplier effect, hastening and maximising the return on investment.

62.   Regional integration contributes to the development of the global Information Society and makes strong cooperation within and among regions indispensable. Regional dialogue should contribute to national capacity building and to the alignment of national strategies with the goals of this Declaration of Principles in a compatible way, while respecting national and regional particularities. In this context, we welcome and encourage the international community to support the ICT-related measures of such initiatives.

- Through its Regional Offices in Senegal, Brazil and Thailand and its Division of Regional Activities, IFLA promotes regional initiatives to enhance library and information services and improve information access.

63.   We resolve to assist developing countries, LDCs and countries with economies in transition through the mobilization from all sources of financing, the provision of financial and technical assistance and by creating an environment conducive to technology transfer, consistent with the purposes of this Declaration and the Plan of Action.

64.   The core competences of ITU in the fields of ICTs—assistance in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information—are of crucial importance for building the Information Society.

C. Towards an Information Society for all based on shared knowledge

65.   **We commit ourselves** to strengthening cooperation to seek common responses to the challenges and to the implementation of the Plan of Action, which will realize the vision of an inclusive Information Society based on the Key Principles incorporated in this Declaration.

66.   **We further commit ourselves** to evaluate and follow-up progress in bridging the digital divide, taking into account different levels of development, so as to reach internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and to assess the effectiveness of investment and international cooperation efforts in building the Information Society.

67.   **We are firmly convinced** that we are collectively entering a new era of enormous potential, that of the Information Society and expanded human communication. In this emerging society, information and knowledge can be produced, exchanged, shared and communicated through all the networks of the world. All individuals can soon, if we take the necessary actions, together build a new Information Society based on shared knowledge and founded on global solidarity and a better mutual understanding between peoples and nations. We trust that these measures will open the way to the future development of a true knowledge society.

- IFLA and its members are focussed on developing an equitable and inclusive Information Society which will provide opportunities for all and will be firmly based on human rights and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Delegates at the IFLA/WSIS Pre-Conference to the World Summit on the Information Society, Libraries @ the Heart of the Information Society, meeting in the Hall of the General Assembly at the United Nations in Geneva, 3-4 November 2003, called 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 which are essential to 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.

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International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

IFLA is the global voice of the library and information profession. Established in 1927, it currently has more than 1,750 members in over 150 countries.

IFLA is an independent, international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. Our aims are to promote high standards of provision and delivery of library and information services, encourage widespread understanding of the value of good library and information services, and represent the interests of our members throughout the world

In pursuing these aims IFLA embraces the following core values:

- We believe that people, communities and organizations need for their physical, mental, democratic and economic well-being, unhindered access to information, ideas and works of imagination
- We believe that the provision and delivery of high quality library and information services help guarantee that access
- We are committed to enabling library associations and institutions throughout the world, and their staff, to participate in the work of the Federation regardless of geographical location

- We support and promote the principles of freedom of access to information ideas and works of imagination embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- We recognize the rights of all members to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, ethnic origin, gender, language, political philosophy, race or religion.

More information can be found at: www.ifla.org/wsis