

International Relations Committee Report to Council

June 27, 2016

Submitted by Leslie Burger, Chair

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International Participation at Annual

The IRC is pleased to report nearly 400 librarians from 58 countries participated in Annual here in Orlando. Besides a large number of colleagues from Canada, large delegations from Japan, Taiwan, and Korea participated this year. Among the international dignitaries, ALA welcomed Kwack Dong Chul, President of the Korean Library Association.

The IRC would like to thank the International Relations Round Table (IRRT) for all their support of international colleagues by providing an Orientation session on Friday, organizing and staffing the International Visitors Lounge, and, of course, for hosting the International Reception that will take place this evening.

International Programs in Orlando

Orlando provided all attendees with a wealth of internationally focused programs spanning the globe and echoing ALA's Libraries Transform initiative and the overall themes of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The East Asia and Pacific Committee's program featured transformative efforts in three countries in the region, and the Korean Library Association presented the program "Public Libraries Finding Their Place at the Heart of Civic Life in South Korea."

The America's Committee sponsored "Librarians in Latin American Connecting and Sharing," while Europe featured "Empowering Citizens in Copenhagen."

The Near East South Asia Committee's timely program, "Libraries Building Bridges Between Different Communities," complimented SRRT's program "Palestinian Libraries Under Occupation," and the APALA's president's program, "From Vietnam to Syria: Refugees, Their Stories and Needs."

In addition, 23 international posters sessions from countries such as Panama, Qatar, and China provided opportunities to learn how colleagues from abroad are creatively transforming their libraries and services to meet the needs of their communities.

IFLA Report

Donna Scheeder, President, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), thanked ALA for all its support for the upcoming IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Columbus. Scheeder also thanked ALA for providing the platform support for the IFLA Webinar Series for New Professionals.

New IFLA Secretary Gerald Leitner started on June 1st. Leitner already is undertaking a review of the IFLA Regional Offices system and will be bringing recommendations to strengthen IFLA services to regions outside North America and Europe.

IFLA will be updating its [Trends Report](#), created in 2013. The update takes a broader approach and identifies five, high-level trends shaping the information society, spanning access to education, privacy, civic engagement, and transformation.

ALA and IFLA WLIC Columbus, August 13–19

The IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Columbus is almost here. ALA and its members have been actively involved in the planning and preparations to host delegates from around the world. Registration currently stands at 2,500 from over 130 countries. So far the registration from the U.S. is looking strong, with a little over 1,000. The registration goal is 3,500.

Hundreds of ALA members from the U.S and abroad will be going to the Congress. ALA will have an expanded exhibit space at this year's Congress, which will include an ALA Store to sell ALA books and merchandise. In addition to all the ALA members presenting programs and poster sessions, a number of ALA groups have been directly involved in helping their IFLA counterparts. ALA's Library History Round Table is co-organizer of "Libraries and Immigrants: Historical Perspectives."

In addition, ALA products and initiatives will be featured in presentations at the Expo Pavilion. ALCTS members will be highlighting Preservation Week, including some hands-on training, while Jamie LaRue will be promoting taking Banned Books Week international. There will also be two presentations on the RDA Toolkit.

The International Relations Office continues its hands-on coordination of the IFLA Fellows program, which is providing full support for 73 international librarians, primarily from developing countries, along with 1,000 stipends for 115 North American librarians. In addition to the regular IFLA program, they will participate in a full-afternoon workshop facilitated by Susan Hildreth and ALA Past President Maureen Sullivan, and be fêted at a special reception with the donors at the Main Columbus Metropolitan Library.

The IRC would like to thank ACRL and PLA for being among the over 100 libraries, associations, friends groups, and library vendors that contributed to this effort. The IRC also would like to thank IMLS for granting ALA \$50,000 to enable librarians and library workers in the United States from diverse backgrounds to participate in their first international conference. Furthermore, IRC extends its extreme gratitude to incoming

ALA President-elect Jim Neal for his extraordinary fund-raising effort, and for arranging the additional activities at the Congress for the Fellows. The full amount raised is \$433,000.

ALA Cuba Tour

ALA's historic Library Tour to Cuba took place February 16–23 during the Havana Book Fair. President Sari Feldman and PLA President Vailey Oehlke, along with Past President Barbara Ford and retired OIF Director Barbara Jones, led a delegation of 30 members, friends, and family. President Feldman and the other ALA leaders met with the leadership of La Asociación Cubana de Bibliotecarios (ASCUBI), and began discussions on future collaborative efforts between the two associations. A follow-up meeting is set to take place at the IFLA Congress in Columbus.

Presidents Feldman and Oehlke presented at the conference organized by ASCUBI and La Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí. The conference theme was “Continuity and the New Roles of Libraries in the Information and Knowledge Society.” IRO is already working on a follow-up Library Tour for 2017.

U.S.–Germany Library Partnership Begins

ALA's three-year partnership with the German library community was launched at the German Library Conference, March 14–17, in Leipzig. ALA President Feldman led a delegation of 30 librarians from the United States. The U.S. librarians made a number of presentations. IRO collaborated with the U.S. Embassy in Berlin to organize a very popular exhibit featuring ALA and librarians, libraries, and library services in the United States. IRO is working with the Europe Committee on plans for a large German presence at next year's ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. In addition, joint webinars and other activities are being planned to bring the two library communities together.

SIBF-ALA Library Conference Continues

ALA has renewed its agreement with the Sharjah Book Authority to present the 3rd annual bilingual [SIBF-ALA Library Conference](#), November 8–10. IRO is responsible for the programmatic planning. Incoming ALA President Julie Todaro will be the keynote speaker to open the conference. Registration opened in early June. The conference is again expected to attract close to 500 participants from the region and other countries from all types of libraries.

IRRT

In addition to all the on-site conference activities in Orlando organized by the IRRT, Chair John Hickok provided a report on the successful IRRT-conceived Emerging Leaders project, which included 5 ELs who created a new global resource: [Free Links on Library Disaster Preparedness](#). The IRRT also provided a free webinar on LIS Fulbright opportunities, which attracted 100 participants from around the world.

The IRRT continues to be the largest round table. Its current membership is 1,713. After many years of effort and a recent final promotion this spring, the IRRT reached the \$50,000 plateau required by the ALA Endowment Fund to establish its endowment.

International and Global Course in ALA-Accredited LIS Programs

In May Professor Terry Weech, University of Illinois- Urbana-Champaign, and student Alyson Bell compiled an updated list of ALA-Accredited LIS programs offering courses focused on international librarianship and global issues. The last full review was accomplished in 2009 by the International Relations Office. Currently, 23 programs offer one or more courses with an international focus.

Marrakesh Treaty

The IRC heartily endorsed the resolution that will be brought forward tomorrow by the Committee on Legislation to urge the U.S. Senate to immediately ratify the [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled](#), adopted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in August 2013.

Resolution on the Restoration of the United Nations Depository Library System

At the behest of GODORT, the International Relations Committee has been kept abreast over the last few years of their strong concern over the developments regarding the United Nations Depository Library (UNDL) Program. Currently, the 365 UN depository libraries located in 136 countries represent a high level of relatively low-cost accessible collections to a large number of people, and provides the sole presence and critical knowledge and information produced by the United Nations.

The UN is now proposing that the print program that is now part of the Depository Program be eliminated. The UN also proposes that UNDL's around the world will need to pay \$12,500 a year to access the new UN iLibrary online platform, regardless of their locations or situations. This fee is much higher than UNDLs currently pay to be part of the program, and five times higher than the initial suggested fee of around \$2,500 for their access to UN iLibrary.

Therefore, the United Nations has created a situation that will be cost prohibitive for many UNDLs, which results in diminished access and participation by the depository libraries to collect and distribute UN information in the future. This shifting of critical UN information sources to a primarily online platform would disadvantage communities around the globe that are without reliable access to the Internet, especially in developing countries or those under distress from war, disasters, or economic disadvantages.

Therefore the IRC brings forth this resolution to Council.

[Action Item]

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members, urges the UN to take steps to ensure the long-term equitable access to its information products by:

- 1. reinstating the print depository library program for countries in areas of the world where the cost of Internet access is too high and not widely developed, so as to ensure transparent and ready access to UN information worldwide, and to continue to operate this program parallel to its online platforms, the United Nations iLibrary and the UN Digital Repository;**
- 2. providing the United Nations Depository Library Program with free access to the iLibrary in order to assure equitable access to all member countries of the United Nations, in the spirit other languages of the Principles Governing Depository Libraries;**
- 3. abiding by the recommendations made by depository libraries concerning the Consultation Paper, which were submitted to the UN Department of Public Information in June 2014 and published in the Executive Summary on the Analysis of Responses to the Consultation Paper on the Re-engineering of the UN Depository Libraries Programmes that Depository Libraries “receive a comprehensive and integrated service from DHL including distribution of relevant paid/unpaid publications and documents through the Digital Repository,” including implementing and adhering to a digital preservation policy and considering delaying the UN iLibrary in order to consult with corresponding stakeholders (i.e. Dag Hammarskjöld Library and United Nations Depository Libraries (UNDLs));**
- 4. encouraging full cooperation and communication among the United Nations Depository Library Program, UN Publications, and the UN Department of Public Information to assure the broadest possible access to UN documents and publications; and**
- 5. respecting existing UN policy, which states, “The United Nations Publications Board, on the advice of the Head Librarian of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and taking into account the views of the Government concerned, designates depository libraries” (UN Doc: ST/AI/I89/Add.11/Rev.2), by appointing a working panel to study the issues, comprised of representatives from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Publications Board, and Depository Libraries.**

RESOLUTION ON THE RESTORATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEPOSITORY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Whereas ALA Policy 6.1.1 International Relations- Policy Objectives is “To encourage the exchange, dissemination, and access to information and the unrestricted flow of library materials in all formats throughout the world (ALA Key Action Area: Equitable Access to Information and Library Services)”;

Whereas United Nations Policy, as found in the *Principles Governing Depository Libraries*, states that “all depository libraries shall receive automatically, according to their needs, all publications offered for sale and public information material distributed free, if available in the official language of their choice” (UN Doc: ST/AI/189/Add.11/Rev.2);

Whereas the United Nations (UN) dedicates its programs, services and mission to the promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms, which must include the free flow of public and government information internationally;

Whereas the UN, over the last 70 years, is one of the primary producers of internationally shared information, documents, publications and other critical sources of knowledge that support fundamental rights and freedoms, and that these critical public information sources remain part of our international historic record that benefit researchers and users around the world;

Whereas the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 16.6, 16.7, 16.8 and 16.10 rely upon a clearly transparent form of information creation and distribution that allows for the ready access to these sources of public knowledge as key components of national and international governance structures and sustainable development;

Whereas since its establishment in 1946, the UN manages a low-cost and publicly accessible depository library program that enables partner libraries and their institutions to provide free and ready public access to vital UN resources, expert knowledge, and that supports the human right to the free flow of international government information;

Whereas 365 UN depository libraries located in 136 countries represent a high level of relatively low-cost accessible collections to a large number of people, and provides the sole presence and critical knowledge and information about UN Secretariat activities, programs and services in 83 countries;

Whereas the depository library program remains one of best examples of how the shared expert knowledge of librarians can help local communities navigate a complex set of government datasets, knowledge and information tools;

Whereas United Nations Depository librarians have been solid partners with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL) since 1946;

Whereas the estimated annual cost of the new commercial model for the United Nations iLibrary online platform will be cost prohibitive for many UN depository libraries, and result in diminished access and participation of the depository libraries to collect and distribute UN information in the future;

Whereas shifting critical UN information sources to a primarily online platform would disadvantage communities around the globe that are without reliable access to the Internet, especially in developing countries or those under distress from war, ecological disasters, or economic disadvantages; and

Whereas the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) needs to more carefully consider the recommendations of the UN depository library community, solicited via *A New Strategic Direction for UN Depository Libraries Consultation Paper*, issued by the DHL in April 2014; now, therefore, be it

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