

September 30, 2009

RE: UNESCO / IFLA MULTICULTURAL MANIFESTO

Dear National Commission Colleagues,

At the upcoming UNESCO General Conference in Paris on October 15th the adoption of The UNESCO IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto will be on the agenda. The Manifesto was endorsed by UNESCO's Information for All Programme (IFAP) in April 2008. Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CBUC) encourages the National Commission's representatives at UNESCO's General Conference in October in Paris to support the adaption of the UNESCO IFLA Multicultural Manifesto, stressing the importance of library services in a multicultural society.

"Respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security." (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001)

In order to support this goal all institutions of society, such as schools, libraries etc. must actively address this issue. One important element is that libraries of all types reflect, support, and promote cultural and linguistic diversity at the international, national, and local levels.

The IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto is an important tool for working with these issues as the manifesto states:

- Libraries can play an important role in our globalized and multicultural world, as they serve diverse interests and communities, and function as learning, cultural, and information centres.
- Libraries reflect, support, and promote cultural and linguistic diversity, and thus work for cross-cultural dialogue and active citizenship
- Libraries promote and preserve cultural and linguistic heritage. Languages and cultures all over the world are endangered. Libraries preserve and support oral tradition and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples.

In the light of the emerging information and knowledge society and the high-speed technological developments Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CBUC) furthermore expresses its will to assist the National Commission in its efforts to secure free and equal access to information for all, especially in a digital context.

We have noticed UNESCO's important role in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and also the fact that UNESCO works with all stakeholders towards the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS.

Therefore Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CBUC) wants to draw the Commission's attention to the importance of developing National Information and Knowledge Strategies as an important key to national as well as local information and knowledge development, taking advantage of the library as central player in this development.

In closing, we would like to suggest a meeting with the Commission to discuss future ways of contact and support.

Yours sincerely



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