



80th anniversary of establishment of National Library of Iran

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Authorities, all protocols observed. First of all, I would like to thank Miss **Ashraf Boroujerdi** her kind invitation to the International Federation of Libraries Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to participate in the celebration marking the 80th anniversary of establishment of Iran National Library.

It's my great pleasure to take part as IFLA's President in this Opening and have the opportunity to visit your wonderful country.

Last year in IFLA's World Library and Information Conference in Wroclaw, Poland, I had the chance to give my acceptance address at the closing session in the magnificent Centennial Hall and introduced briefly my statement as IFLA President 2017-2019. Allow me to introduce myself, I am a librarian. My entire career has been developed in the library field, working in all types of libraries in different positions and becoming in 2010 Director of the National Library of Spain. As I said, different charges that I have combined with Library Associations' activity. First, serving at the Professional Catalan Library Association, later as President of FESABID, the Spanish Federation of Associations of Library, Archives, Documentation and Museums; combined with European involvement as well in EBLIDA, the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations, and working at international level in IFLA since many years that is given me the opportunity to be in contact with librarians and authorities all over the world.

I'm talking about this background to remark that the gift I have gotten with these high positions and association's involvement have given me the chance to achieve a deep library overview and encouraged me as well to serve working on the transformation of IFLA in a new approach to strengthen the library field.

Last year, IFLA started a global conversation leaded by its Secretary General, Gerald Leitner, looking forward finding out a LIBRARIES global VISION regarding Libraries' future and how a united library field should face the globalization challenges: what is happening in our global information society world nowadays, and what we should do to tackle the challenges, acting as getting the position of the main library umbrella organization in the world, getting on board all library organizations, partners and stakeholders. The Global Vision discussion process started in Athens last April 2017 in a kick-off workshop with officers of IFLA Professional Units and continued with six Regional Workshops, where Iran was especially invited to participate, further national workshops and an online voting process. IFLA wanted to hear from all librarians and library lover's voices in all regions and countries world-wide under the theme:

“Together we create the future”.

The results of such this global conversation, the ‘Global Vision Report’ is going to be launch in the IFLA's President Meeting in Barcelona next month of March, previously of the kick-off the second phase of this amusing process, to start planning a strategic global model of action plans to tackle the global results.

We will go again to the different Regions and working together with National Libraries and National Library Associations we will found out local needs to strengthen their own library systems. In this new approach, IFLA has started another necessary and interesting project, the LIBRARY MAP of the WORLD, collecting national library data, performance metrics, providing national level library data across all types of libraries in all regions of the world. You can find information about Iran Libraries indeed. Thank you to provide IFLA about this precious information that is shared trough IFLA's website. We will continue asking you

for more statistics than can show internationally your library activity. An international organization have to show rigorously with figures and facts how many libraries there are and their what is library activity.

As I said in my Presidential statement, *I truly believe that universal access to information is a question of freedom for every human being, and that libraries are the gates to gaining democracy through information for all. Therefore, we, librarians, have the utmost responsibility to use all our skills and efforts, in order to safeguard and widen these gates for the benefit of our societies. As the Spanish poet Antonio Machado once wrote: “Caminante no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar” (Traveller, there is no path. The path is made by walking). We, as librarians, can be outstanding at organizing, preserving and disseminating information, but tackling the global challenges altogether is the key to the success of our mission! There is something that we really must believe in as information professionals and librarians and make the “leitmotiv” of our work: we have the responsibility for gaining access to knowledge in all its dimensions and making it a reality for the communities we are committed to. Our role is much more than running our libraries and information centers day-to-day, much more than agreeing and reaching a consensus on standards and guidelines of our library work, our main task is being the gears of the motors for a real and visible change and the development of our society. The UN Agenda 2030 is an opportunity to keep on library work aligned to society needs and global goals.*

IFLA started to deliver last year a great program taking the UN Agenda 2030 as an opportunity to help people achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through library activity: The International Advocacy Program stands to give the library sector the capacity to create and promote a favorable policy framework 5 for valued library services to the community, set and implement regional and national action agendas, and build advocacy skills. As well, as increasing the participation of library associations and public libraries representatives in advocacy work at national and regional levels in order to secure sustainable public access to information through libraries services and programs. So, we

are working together with governments and library institutions in the development of national plans, putting forward initiatives that like the title of the UN 2030 Agenda says can facilitate the “Transformation of our world”. My program as IFLA president 2017-2019 is aligned with IFLA’s new approach of a participatory and inclusive organization, looking also for its sustainability. I am focusing my working on changing our mind-sets being highly effective in social involvement, as leaders advocating for important issues like Information Literacy, Digital Transformation, Innovation, Digital Preservation and Copyright Reform. But I will be very glad to have your inputs about what we need as IFLA members. Once again, I have to thank our Secretary General his initiative to launch the first IFLA SURVEY that will be forward to its members as a gift for IFLA’s ninety-year-old celebration. We need to create an effective synergy among library networks to take advantage of and synchronize the tremendous work we must do over the coming years. Mainly for two reasons: to answer our users we share in a digital environment, and to achieve our goal reaching a united library field.

I believe it’s imperative that librarians of different kind of libraries understand each other and work together. It can’t be an effective work if we don’t do first at local and national level in order to keep ready to join regional and global initiatives to strengthen a united library field and a global voice. It’s very important that all kind of libraries share a common vision and structure our responsibilities in order to get effective global results while we act locally and regionally in a synchronized way. We will achieve this commitment because we are hard workers and we know better than anyone else that “Libraries are the motors of change!”

I believe in our common vision, capacity, commitment and involvement. Libraries are the motors of change, and we, librarians, we are the gears that will drive this change, resulting in effective democratic access to information for all people in our societies!

I congratulate this great National Library of Iran in such an important day.

LONG LIFE TO LIBRARIES!

Thank you very much