

## **RSCAO Business Meeting: 10 November 2020**

### **Note from Winston Roberts**

#### **Explanation of two 'other matters' under Agenda item 13:**

- The IFLA Library Sector Workshop held during the APriGF Meeting.
- Proposal for a RSCAO Zoom discussion/webinar on the SDGs.

#### **The IFLA Library Sector Workshop held during the APriGF Meeting 27-30 September 2020.**

1. A Multi-stakeholder Group (MSG) organises the annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific regional Internet Governance Forum (APriGF), one of many national and regional initiatives responding to the work of the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) established by the UN in 2005. The IGF and its regional versions bring together stakeholders from government, business, academia, the Internet/technical sectors and in particular a large number of civil society organisations – one of which is IFLA. The UN mandated the IGF to take a multi-stakeholder approach to discussing public policy issues raised by the development and governance of the Internet. Policy staff from IFLA Headquarters usually attend IGF meetings.
2. Since 2013, an IFLA workshop has been held at the APriGF meeting, in most years. The theme of each IFLA workshop has focused on equitable access to information (content, service delivery, with a strong focus on education and community development) which complements the interests of the Internet community (developing equitable access to a reliable, universally accessible and affordable platform for services).
3. I have organised and moderated these workshops, on behalf of IFLA, and sent a short report each year to IFLA HQ (for the WSIS/Internet Governance theme page on the website) and to the RSCAO. Last year at WLIC in Athens I made a brief presentation explaining why Internet Governance is an important issue for the library sector.
4. This year for the first time the APriGF meeting (and the IFLA workshop) were virtual, by Zoom. The IFLA workshop was again on the theme of Access to Information with a strong focus on services for the community, in presentations by 3 speakers: from the Nepal Library Association, the Myanmar Book Aid and Preservation Foundation, and Internet New Zealand. For IFLA, I also contributed to the organisation of a workshop on Accessibility for persons with disabilities, led by a colleague from Australia (convenor of the ISOC Accessibility SIG), moderated by a colleague from Fiji, and with 3 speakers from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India.
5. At the end of the APriGF meeting each year, a 'Synthesis Document' is compiled reporting the outcomes of the meeting. This is a public document, sent to the UN secretariat for the IGF but also to the stakeholders, including IFLA. The Synthesis Document from this year's meeting has been sent the RSCAO list for circulation. RSCAO members may want to note in particular the 2<sup>nd</sup> section on "Digital inclusion, Gender Equality and Diversity", but the other sections on Cybersecurity, Human Rights, and Innovation are also relevant to the library and information sector.
6. This short report is to bring the Synthesis Document to the attention of RSCAO colleagues, and to make the following points:

- a. The Internet community and the library community need to understand each other better: they share a concern for the issues of freedom of expression, digital literacy, social justice and equitable access to (neutral and unbiased) information which are at the heart of many current controversies.
- b. Library/information services depend on the Internet, and the integrity of the Internet is under threat from many quarters. There could be benefits from joint action by national *library associations* and national *Internet societies* to advocate to their decision-makers for a rational and integrated approach to the governance of the Internet.
- c. Given that the APriGF meeting in September 2021 will be hosted by Nepal, (either physically in Kathmandu or virtually, depending on the international situation), there is a good opportunity for RSCAO members and library association members in the A-P region to participate in that meeting.

### **Proposal for a RSCAO Zoom discussion/webinar on the SDGs.**

1. RSCAO is currently operating a project to gather and publish “Library SDG stories”. RSCAO members are aware of the SDGs from debates within the library community, particularly within IFLA, and perhaps also from their knowledge of the social and economic development policies of their own countries. However it is possible that library professionals would like to have greater understanding of the function of the SDGs in order for library associations to advocate successfully to authorities producing regular national voluntary reports on progress towards achieving the goals in 2030.
2. We know (from UN reports) that many countries have not made the hoped-for progress toward the SDGs, and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have not helped. Can professional associations in the library, information and culture sectors contribute their advice to national efforts to mitigate this situation?
3. I propose that RSCAO hold a *webinar* specifically to update ourselves and other selected participants on the SDGs. The details could be as follows:
  - Date:
    - EITHER a short stand-alone session on a date during the first half of 2021;
    - OR a longer session alongside the mid-year meeting of RSCAO in February 2021, on the assumption that will be held online;
  - Duration: 90 minutes if stand-alone, or 2-3 hours if held with the RSCAO mid-year meeting.
  - Guest keynote speaker: I suggest Loida Garcia-Febo, who has presented sessions for the ALA and for the IFLA LAC standing committee (including one in September this year on the SDGs).
  - Other speakers: 1 other in a short session, or 2-3 in a longer session, followed by Q & A.
  - Moderator: a member of RSCAO, to be decided.
  - Other participants: to be nominated by RSCAO members (e.g. association leaders).
4. If RSCAO agrees in principle, then I am willing to work on the details together with a small working group.