

WLIC 2019 General Assembly REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

I'm very happy to be updating you about my activities in my second year as President. I'll be brief, but as you know, I'm an avid Tweeter, so you can find more there!

Since our last General Assembly, I have intensified my work with Librarians, Library Associations and decision-makers in 20 different countries and in 30 cities worldwide, promoting what it means to be a member of IFLA, part of the Global Library Movement.

I visited wonderful libraries and learned so much about different types of libraries and professionals' needs, and explored opportunities for the broader galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) field.

In turn, I can say, I tried to become an "influencer librarian" – to make a difference, to make a mark. Throughout, I have shared the message that libraries can be 'motors of change' and promotors of equality.

To do this, I have attended conferences, seminars, and meetings – in Denmark, Brazil, Switzerland, Mexico, Taiwan, China, China, Australia, Russia New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates, and of course Spain – encouraging participants to work for a better understanding of the impact of libraries on development and wellbeing, using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework.

Highlights for me have been working together with REDARTE, the Network of Museums Libraries in Rio de Janeiro, discussing fake news in Brasilia, and speaking at the Shanghai International Library Forum.

I have been particularly passionate about engaging libraries in parts of the world where we currently have fewer members.

After the launch of Sharjah World Book Capital 2019, I joined the IFLA/AFLI Library Regional Conference in the Arab Region and had the opportunity to share ideas and further build the momentum there.

But of course, as you already know, I'm the first Spanish-speaking IFLA President, and I have been particularly attentive to the LAC Region. In this, I am grateful for the extraordinary support of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office at Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación Argentina. Thanks to them, we have held many events to intensify IFLA's advocacy in LAC.



In a particularly intense week in May, I helped to relaunch the Digital Network of Parliamentary Libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean. I then chaired the Forum of Ministers of Culture to discuss libraries and their involvement with the SDGs. Together with IFLA's Secretary-General, we chaired an inspiring, and informative discussion, building a "movement" that will not only benefit libraries and their users but also the region as a whole.

We delivered the Buenos Aires Declaration, underlining the need for access to information and libraries to realise the Sustainable Development Goals. And we launched the 2019 Development and Access to Information Report, in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington.

I also held my second President's Meeting, focusing on how libraries, as guarantors of access to information, can be 'motors of change'. I called all there, as I call on you now, to be part of our Movement, because organised and empowered libraries can genuinely improve lives.

And finally, I took all of these messages to the global level at the Permanent Mission of Argentina of the United Nations last month, in a special event on Information for Development.

As President, it is also important to work with leaders outside of our field. I am proud to have extended cooperation with other actors in the information and book sector – authors, publishers, collecting societies – to increase the availability of works, and to facilitate meaningful access.

This is not always easy, but by understanding each other's priorities and interests, we can define a concrete agenda for cooperation. I believe that we now have a stronger spirit of collaboration among global organisations representing key partners for libraries, such as: UNESCO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the International Council on Archives, the International Council on Museums, the International Federation of Reproductive Rights Organisations, the International Publishers Association, the International Association of Scientific, Technological and Medical Publishers, and the International Authors Forum.

We must also be ready to work with our suppliers and partners. I have strategic meetings with companies and foundations to persuade them to support Library Association, and to work to identify new possibilities and services. I intensified my work looking for support and sponsorship of IFLA events.

This same spirit of collaboration is necessary within our field. And I am happy to have supported this in Hangzhou, China at the "Curators' Forum of Libraries Union Library between China and Central and Eastern European Countries".

I am a firm believer in building a positive mindset and embracing innovation. I have supported university libraries in realising their potential to use culture to strengthen societies.

The same goes for public libraries – I was proud to mentor libraries in Russia towards a nation-wide project on promoting culture.

And of course, I also advocated for libraries to politicians, not least all those at the Forum of Ministers in Buenos Aires.

Together with the IFLA SG, I met the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation, to give him a better understanding of library needs, and seek support on our efforts to get better laws for our institutions.

I had the honour of launching the "Library Manifesto for Europe" at the opening of the German Library Congress, a document which many of you have drawn on.

Finally, and most importantly, I spread the word about IFLA's transformation, and the Global Vision. I have been thrilled by your reactions.

Because, dear colleagues, now I have reached the end of my report, I want to highlight how much of an inspiration it has been to be President of IFLA at this time.

Having "worked together" with the SG and IFLA President-Elect on our Strategy, having seen how our Professional Units and members have engaged, how mindsets are changing, there is much to be optimistic about.

I have many thanks to give, especially to my employer Diputació de Barcelona, IFLA SG, Gerald Leitner, IFLA staff, President-Elect Christine Mackenzie, Treasurer Barbara Lison, and all GB members. Thank you to those who are involved in IFLA's Transformation, thousands and thousands of librarians, because IFLA is what it is, and will be what it will become thanks to all of us.

IFLA is all of us.

Thank you very much!

Glòria Pérez-Salmerón

IFLA President 2017-2019