



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

10 December 2014

Response to the Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General On the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda: "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet"

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) welcomes the Report and the inclusion of access to information, and encourages the United Nations to recognise the role of access and skills as an essential pillar in the transformational agenda for sustainable development.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the global voice of the library and information community, and the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. IFLA is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization with over 1400 members in 150 countries. We welcome the United Nations Secretary-General's synthesis report¹ on the post-2015 development agenda, the transformative approach to human-rights based sustainable development, a renewed global partnership for development, and a framework to monitor implementation. IFLA welcomes the inclusion of **access to information** as a means of supporting development through safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions:

"Press freedom and **access to information**, freedom of expression, assembly and association are enablers of sustainable development."

Consequently, we encourage the UN to fully recognise the **transformative impact of access to information** in a human-rights based approach to development by including access to information, and the skills to use it effectively, as a cross-cutting target that supports all sustainable development goals, and as a means of implementation.

We welcome the focus on a sustainable development agenda for **Intellectual Property reform**, which supports access to publicly funded research (Open Access), access to technology for all, TRIPS flexibility, and incentives for technological innovation.

We **also welcome the** inclusion of further issues in the Report that support access to information, including **culture** and **indigenous knowledge** as tools for learning and diversity; and **lifelong learning** as a critical educational skill.

We support **access to open data** and **measuring information gaps** as a means of implementation. We note the need for Media and Information Literacy skills to bridge the gap

¹ http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5527SR_advance%20unedited_final.pdf

between the information rich and information poor in accessing, using and communicating data and information will only increase in a digital environment.

Unfortunately, we are disappointed that the report lacks substance on the potential of ICTs for development. It would indeed be a missed opportunity if the United Nations failed to include input from the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) process begun in 2003. We therefore call on UN Member States to integrate outcomes, including targets and indicators, from WSIS to ensure the post-2015 development agenda recognises the important role of ICTs and an open Internet as a means of implementation, and the importance of affordable access to ICTs and public access, through facilities such as libraries and community information centres, particularly in rural and remote areas.

To support the inclusion of access to information in the post-2015 development agenda, more than 480 national and international organisations have signed the *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development*², launched in August 2014. The *Lyon Declaration* shows that libraries, information intermediaries, and development organisations are united behind the inclusion of access to information in the post-2015 development agenda. We encourage the UN and its Member States to use the *Lyon Declaration* during the next stage of intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda to inform the inclusion of access to information, and the skills to use it effectively by:

- Acknowledging the public's right to access information and data, while respecting the right to individual privacy;
- Recognising the important role of local authorities, information intermediaries and infrastructure such as ICTs and an open Internet as a means of implementation;
- Adopting policy, standards and legislation to ensure the continued funding, integrity, preservation and provision of information by governments, and access by people;
- Developing targets and indicators that enable measurement of the impact of access to information and data.

Information intermediaries such as libraries have the skills and resources to help governments, institutions and individuals communicate, organize, structure and understand data that is critical to development and stand ready as capable institutions with skills and capacities to support the implementation of the new sustainable development agenda.

² *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development* www.lyondeclaration.org