

# **“Libraries on the Agenda“**

**By Claudia Lux**

**Presidential speech at the Closing Session,**

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**World Library and Information Congress in Durban,**

**South Africa**

**Hochverehrte Gäste,**

**meine Damen und Herren,**

**liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen!**

Es ist für mich eine besondere Ehre und große Freude heute das Amt als IFLA-Präsidentin übertragen zu bekommen und ich freue mich auf die gemeinsame und interessante Zeit mit Ihnen. Zu allererst und ganz besonders möchte ich an dieser Stelle allen deutschen Kolleginnen und Kollegen danken, die mich auf dem Weg dahin und in dieser Arbeit immer unterstützt haben und ohne die ich hier heute nicht stehen würde. Mein Dank gilt vor allem

der Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Bibliotheksverbände mit ihren Mitgliedsverbänden und ihrer BII „Bibliothek Information International“,

dem Goethe-Institut und der Deutschen

Forschungsgemeinschaft mit ihrer Förderung der IFLA-Arbeit und

dem deutschen Auswärtigen Amt mit seiner Unterstützung meiner Presidential Meetings.

Mein Dank gilt nicht zuletzt den Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus meiner eigenen Bibliothek, der Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin, besonders meinen beiden Stellvertreterinnen, für ihre engagierte Hilfe und Motivation.

Und ich liebe die überraschende Inspiration, so wie ich sie auch vorgestern von der deutschen Delegation erfahren durfte, als mir diese aufblasbare Weltkugel überreicht wurde. Sie soll mir nicht nur zeigen, wo ich mich gerade aufhalte, sondern hat auch ein Kreuz an der richtigen Stelle, um immer wieder nach Hause zu finden und den Boden der realen Basisarbeit nicht zu verlieren.

Herzlichen Dank! (Deutsch) oder wie wir bei auch IFLA sagen Shukran (Arabisch), Xiexie nimen! (Chinesisch), Merci beaucoup! (Französisch), Muchas Gracias! (Spanisch), Spassibo (Russisch) und Thank you.

It is a great honour for me to address you today as President of IFLA.

Dear colleagues, distinguished guests, honoured dignitaries and friends of IFLA,

I would like to express again my sincere appreciation to my predecessor, Alex Byrne, --thank you -- and to all those who have contributed to my pre-presidency in many ways. I look forward to a very active and intense two years, during which some of my personal goals for the librarian profession (that libraries will be on the agenda) will become realised not only for myself and for IFLA as a world-wide professional association, but also for many of you and many of our colleagues.

I am overwhelmed and honoured at the trust and confidence placed in me in electing me as President of IFLA. I accept this office in full realisation of its responsibilities, expectations, and demands for effective results! Thank you all for your vote of confidence in my leadership for IFLA during the coming two years. It is a great opportunity and a challenge, and with your help and support, I hope to overcome most of the difficulties, dedicate myself to the tasks at hand, and move us as professionals a few steps forward.

The topic I have chosen as focal point for the term of my IFLA presidency, is to enable us all, in as many ways as possible, to place libraries on the agenda!

Whose agenda?

The agendas of our governments at state, regional and local level,

the agendas of our leading politicians as a facette of all of their decisions,  
the agenda of our cultural, economic, and educational institutions,  
the agenda of our sponsors and donors,  
the agenda of the institutions in which we serve and in the minds of our constituency down to the individual users, beneficiaries of our outreach services, and even the non-users!

This entails achieving a heightened degree of awareness of the value, services and resources represented by the individual libraries all over the world. It means enhancing the image of the library as a powerful instrument for education for all, for life-long learning, for freedom of access to information at all levels, for diminishing the digital divide, for the information society in action, for maintaining the ideals of democracy and social equity, and many other deseirable values needed to make the world a better place.

Libraries have strong and impressive values to share.

Within the globalisation tendencies evident in our daily lives and in all aspects of education, culture, business, economics,

and the social structures of the various countries we represent, putting libraries on the agenda means active awareness-raising of not only libraries and the value of their work, but also the importance of the values they manifest.

And, finally, it also involves the empowerment of the librarian – the building of personality structures to enable librarians at all levels to recognise the chances for advocacy and use them effectively to support and achieve these goals.

I firmly believe, that constant and active advocacy is the key to guarantee sustainability and development for libraries and library services at all levels. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions is no exception to this. To support our members in their daily advocacy work, to strengthen free access to information and freedom of expression, to follow up the action lines of the World Summit of the Information Society, especially access to information, and to put into reality what we achieved on paper, we must develop our advocacy capacity in IFLA during the next years.

Therefore it was my great pleasure that on Tuesday evening I could announce the One Million Dollar Grant the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has given to IFLA to support our work and I want to express my sincere thanks for this generous support again in this audience.

This is a wonderful start for my presidency and a long wanted achievement of the last Governing Board.

Colleagues, there is nothing an IFLA president can achieve without you,  
the active members in the library associations and institutions, in our professional groups, sections, divisions and the governing board,  
without you, our partners and suppliers, following us around the globe  
without you, our sponsors and donors  
last but not least  
without you, the staff of our headquarters and its Secretary General.

Full of trust in the possibilities we will create I happily accept to work with you during the next two years as the President of IFLA.

Thank you.