

**Draft minutes of the General Assembly held on
Wednesday, 23 August 2023 and Thursday 24 August 2023,
at the Rotterdam Ahoy Convention Centre, Rotterdam, The Netherlands and online**

Wednesday 23 August 2023

1. Opening by the Chair

President Barbara Lison opened the meeting at 14:00 on Wednesday, 23 August 2023 and welcomed the members present in the Auditorium of the Ahoy Convention Centre in Rotterdam and following virtually on the Lumi meeting platform or YouTube. She introduced those supporting her: Secretary General Sharon Memis, Treasurer Jaap Naber, IFLA Notary Martijn van Ansem, and Director Policy and Advocacy Stephen Wyber.

2. Information on voting and counting of votes

Details of registered voting members, their proxies and their weighted votes were provided to the meeting platform company engaged to assist with the meeting. All voting took place online in a secure and accurate matter with results automatically calculated and provided to the meeting.

3. Establishment of a Quorum

At the beginning of the meeting there were 140 national and international association members who have paid their fees for 2023 and were not in arrears. With 77 members registered, a quorum was established.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

5. Minutes of the General Assembly held in The Hague, Netherlands on 25 August 2022

The minutes of this meeting were adopted.

6. In memoriam of those members who have died during the past year

The President invited members to remember in silence Frank Hogg, Edward Huck Tee Lim, Ulrich Hagenah, Filippos Tsimpoglou, Mary Ronnie and other colleagues who have died during the past year.

7. Presentation of the report of the President

President Barbara Lison spoke on her stewardship role during 2022, believing that a sustainable future for IFLA is essential to ensure a sustainable future for our field. 2022 was not a typical year with events that caused concern among members. IFLA parted ways with the former Secretary General, Gerald Leitner and saw changes to the Governing Board with the election of Vicki McDonald as President-elect, Jaap Naber as Treasurer, and Te Paea Paringatai as Professional Council Chair.

In response to the concerns, the Governing Board started a broad process of improvement by establishing and implementing *The Plan for Securing IFLA's Future*. Much has been achieved with additional communication, and updates to the *Plan* have been provided regularly to members.

A new *IFLA Code of Ethics and Conduct for Members of the Governing Board* was developed and implemented and the completed *IFLA Handbook* now provides operational guidance for IFLA's committees and officers.

Leadership at IFLA Headquarters was stabilised following the work of Halo Locher as Designate of the Governing Board and Helen Mandl as Acting Secretary General. Sharon Memis has been welcomed as IFLA's new Secretary General bringing an excellent range of international skills and management experiences to build a solid path to a sustainable future.

The President noted the privilege she had in working with, and visiting members in many countries across the globe, from Türkiye to Japan, and the USA to Qatar. She expressed her amazement at the activities being undertaken and the energy and vibrancy of those organisations whose efforts are instigating change and helping the growth of our profession. The future of IFLA is to support the outstanding work that is occurring.

8. Presentation of IFLA's Annual Report

The Secretary General introduced the report on operational matters and major activities. The report followed the IFLA Strategy and its four key directions.

As part of building a stronger voice for libraries, a strong delegation to the 2022 United Nations High-Level Political Forum concentrated on libraries' role as partners for development and deepened contacts with national decision makers. IFLA's representatives included a call for an explicit culture goal in future development agendas as part of the 30th anniversary of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme and the MONDIACULT meeting of culture ministers and decision makers.

IFLA launched an updated IFLA statement on Open Access and provided useful impact data at WIPO as we continued to prioritise improvements in copyright for libraries.

Inspiring and enhancing professional practice is core to the second Strategic Direction and a key highlight was the update of the IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto and at year's end, over 25 translations had been made. In other developments, IFLA released the 3rd edition of the *Guidelines for Parliamentary Libraries*, the *Guidelines for Professional Library and Information Science Education Programmes* and formed a new Special Interest Group on Artificial Intelligence.

Meeting and connecting for the first time since 2019 in person at the IFLA Congress in Dublin, Ireland was an outstanding experience achieved with the persistence and commitment of the Irish National Committee.

The regional units extended IFLA's reach and organised a wide variety of events at the regional and national level. These included work on the promotion of reading and internet governance, areas of importance to regions of the world less well served.

In optimising our organisation, we made use of new possibilities to co-opt new members to units to allow for stronger regional diversity. Key work was undertaken to develop new staff workplace policies within IFLA Headquarters and improve the working environment.

As IFLA seeks to attract support from external funders, we acknowledge current funders including the Arcadia Fund and the European Union in addition to Stichting IFLA Global Libraries for their support and belief in IFLA's work.

In response to a question on whistleblowing, the Secretary General noted that a whistleblowers policy was in place at IFLA Headquarters.

A number of members commented on the Governing Board's decision to approve the holding of the Congress in Dubai in 2024 and how the process was communicated. The President noted that the results of the advisory referendum had been robustly discussed in the Governing Board and various aspects of the issue had been outlined in sessions during the Congress and in numerous communications with members and volunteers. It was acknowledged that communications could have been improved. Members noted the timing of a General Assembly in 2024 being held in a location where some felt they would not be able to attend.

On the matter of the war in Sudan and damage to cultural heritage, it was noted that IFLA had issued a statement calling for an end to library destruction and looting of cultural property.

IFLA's 2022 Annual Report is available on the IFLA website:
<https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/3211>

9. Presentation of the annual accounts by the Treasurer

Jaap Naber, IFLA Treasurer presented the 2022 annual report as accepted by the Governing Board in its July 2023 meeting for presentation to Members. He noted that in line with a commitment to increasing the amount of information shared with members, for the first time, the full version of the audited financial statements 2022 were made available.

In explaining the statement of income and expenditure in 2022, the Treasurer stated that the resilience of the organisation had been tested. Due to extraordinary income and expenditure involved, IFLA had a deficit of € 472,334 compared to a surplus of € 392,691 in 2021. Factors included special COVID-19 related financial aid from the Dutch government, costs for interim management, additional legal fees and settlement payments to former staff members.

IFLA's reserves (€ 1,755,887 as of December 31, 2022) and a good system of risk management helped to ensure that the federation remains in good shape to serve the membership. The Treasurer outlined that IFLA had received an unqualified opinion from the new auditor indicating that IFLA is financially well-managed, and that the federation was also in a financially healthy position.

The Governing Board had identified four key focus points for the coming years – developing long-term financial sustainability; income diversification; fundraising; and scenario planning with attention to risk management. The Treasurer will ensure these are integral to IFLA’s future.

On a question regarding internal audits, the Treasurer responded that the new auditor had tested IFLA’s internal financial processes and examined relevant documentation and had found no irregularities.

As to why IFLA had moved to a settlement with the former Secretary General, the Treasurer stated that an examination of the case based on Dutch law with legal advice showed that IFLA may have put itself in a place of high financial and reputational risk. Therefore, his advice to the Governing Board as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee had been to seek a settlement.

On the question of conflict management, the Secretary General responded that since her appointment, she had sought to ensure relevant policies were in place to support staff. In the future, she would be looking at internal culture, values and behaviours in conjunction with headquarters staff.

The meeting adopted the 2022 Annual Accounts.

The full text of the Treasurer’s report is on the IFLA website:

<https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/report-on-the-annual-accounts-2022.pdf>

The President acknowledged IFLA’s donors, sponsors and supporting organisations who in a variety of ways generously support the activities that are undertaken throughout the year.

10. Formal announcement of the Results of the Ballot for the Election of President-elect, Treasurer and for places on the Governing Board

IFLA held elections in 2023 for the positions across all its committees. The positions of President-elect, Treasurer and five members-at-large of the Governing Board are elected by the Members.

The result of the election for President-elect was:

Leslie Weir (Canada)

The result of the election for Treasurer was:

Jaap Naber (Netherlands)

Those elected as members-at-large of the Governing Board were:

Stuart Hamilton (Ireland)

Kirsten Boelt (Denmark)

Nthabiseng Kotsokoane (South Africa)

Dilara Begum (Bangladesh)

Silvia Stasselová (Slovakia)

Additional members are part of the Governing Board in their capacity:
Te Paea Paringatai – Chair of the Professional Council
Alejandro Santa – Chair of the Regional Council
Loida Garcia-Febo – Chair of the Management of Library Associations Section

11. Motions and Resolutions

11.1 Motion to approve the holding of the next General Assembly in August 2024

Given the concern of some members about holding the next General Assembly in Dubai in conjunction with WLIC, an alternative motion was proposed. In line with procedure, the original motion as published in the Convening Notice was put to the Members.

To authorise the Governing Board to convene the General Assembly to coincide with the next IFLA World Library and Information Congress which shall take place in August 2024. In the case of an unavoidable delay the General Assembly may be convened at a later date, but no later than 31 October 2024.

This motion was lost.

The General Assembly then voted on the following motion:

The General Assembly approves voting on the revised motion.

The motion was approved in the affirmative.

The revised motion was submitted and put to the Members.

The General Assembly of 2023 does not endorse holding the next in Dubai, given the risks with holding it in a country that has exercised censorship on the program of the conference. It does however support the Governing Board to plan that the next General Assembly be held no later than October 2023 in another location as a hybrid meeting.

The motion was approved in the affirmative and the President requested the Secretary General to execute the motion in 2024.

12. Motion to adjourn and reconvene on 24 August 2023

Having conducted the main business of the General Assembly, the President noted the motion to adjourn and reconvene at the Closing Session at 15:00 on Thursday 24 August 2023.

To adjourn the General Assembly and reconvene at the Closing Session at 15:00 on Thursday 24 August 2023.

The motion was resolved in the affirmative.

The President thanked all who took the time to attend in person or to participate in real time wherever they were in the world. She then formally adjourned the meeting.

Thursday 24 August 2023

12.1 Closing Session: Welcome

The Secretary General welcomed delegates to the Closing Session and introduced the President, Barbara Lison.

12.2 Address by the President Barbara Lison

In her final address, President Barbara Lison spoke about her time as president, as a thrilling experience for anyone who loves, believes in and is committed to libraries. While the last year had been difficult, she hoped to have made a difference in delivering on IFLA's mission to inspire, engage, enable and connect with the global profession.

IFLA is different things to different people. To some it is the Congress, to others it is being part of one of our committees, for others it is our standards, guidelines and materials that provide direct, practical support to daily work. IFLA is a source of ideas, values and direction, and an advocate for libraries to partners and funders. It underlines the uniqueness of IFLA within the library field and how much poorer we would be if we had to start from scratch and throw away all of the connections, the collective wisdom and community that we have.

Barbara Lison noted that the field will not always agree on everything, and intellectual freedom is about the freedom to disagree. However, we have in common a respect for each other and a readiness to listen and accept that there are different viewpoints. Librarians also have a common goal to ensure that everyone, everywhere can benefit from the library services they need to fulfil their rights.

On the subject of WLIC, she noted the extraordinary work of the Dutch National Committee and the example of Rotterdam as a community moment. Those involved in the programming and organisation of sessions were to be congratulated along with the conference volunteers, IFLA and KIT staff.

For the privilege of being President, she thanked all who believed in the strong and bright future of the Federation.

12.3 Presentation of IFLA Awards

IFLA was pleased to acknowledge the grants from the Academic and Research Libraries Section and Dr Shawky Salem that allowed delegates to attend in Rotterdam.

The Secretary General noted the following awards:

IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award 2023 to:

- Sistema de Bibliotecas Publicas de Medellin (Colombia)
- Brooklyn Public Library (United States)
- Foshan Library (China)

IFLA Green Libraries Award 2023

- Biblioteca EPM (Colombia)
- West Vancouver Memorial Library's Climate Writer in Residence (Canada)

IFLA/ Systematic Public Library of the Year Award 2023

- Biblioteca Gabriel Garcia Márquez (Barcelona, Spain)

12.3.1 IFLA Dynamic Unit and Impact Award

Te Paea Paringatai, Chair of the Professional Council presented the following awards:

DUIA Quality and Impact of the Work

- IFLA Library History Special Interest Group

DUIA Effective Communication

- IFLA Management and Marketing Section

DUIA Member Engagement & Leadership Development

- IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section

DUIA Overall Achievement

- IFLA Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section (ENSULIB)

12.3.2 Best Poster

The Best Poster awards were expanded in 2023 to three awards:

IFLA Poster 2023 – WLIC Viewers’ Choice

- #146 – Smart Solat @Raja tun Uda Library (Malaysia)

IFLA Poster 2023 – Visual Impact

- #170 – Voices behind words (Croatia)

Best IFLA Poster 2023

- #169 – Open up your digital library (a collaboration of Austria, Croatia and Netherlands)

12.3.3 IFLA Honours and Awards

The President presented the following awards.

IFLA Scroll of Appreciation

The President presented the IFLA Scroll of Appreciation to Theo Kemperman, Chair of the **Dutch National Committee** in grateful recognition to the National Committee of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, 88th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2023.

The President presented the IFLA Scroll of Appreciation to:

Alicia Cristina Ocaso Ferreira

for her distinguished contribution to IFLA, developing networks to connect librarians, and as a trainer and mentor to professionals and associations in the Latin American region. Her outstanding efforts to advocate for copyright legislation improvements have enabled libraries to innovate services for their communities and develop as spaces for democratic access to information and opportunities.

Harri Sahavirta

for his distinguished contribution to IFLA in the areas of sustainability and the environment in libraries. His tireless promotion and engagement with members has increased awareness and expanded the development of the international green library movement for the betterment of the profession and society.

IFLA Medal

The IFLA Medal is awarded to a person or organisation that made a distinguished contribution to IFLA or to international librarianship.

The IFLA Medal was awarded to **Janine Schmidt** for distinguished service to IFLA and international librarianship, championing innovative library buildings and design, mentoring authors, and enabling as editor, diverse works for IFLA Publications.

Honorary Fellow

The Honorary Fellow is IFLA's highest award and is conferred on a person that has brought distinction to IFLA in the international arena.

The distinction of IFLA Honorary Fellow was conferred on **Christine Mackenzie** for her passion and belief in libraries to build communities. As IFLA President during the COVID-19 pandemic she worked tirelessly to encourage, mentor and support libraries and librarians as they demonstrated how they could make a difference during a crisis. She also led the restructuring of IFLA and the adoption of revised Statutes and Rules of Procedure to make IFLA a more transparent and democratic organisation.

12.4 Outgoing Governing Board 2021 - 2023

The members of the outgoing Governing Board were thanked for their service:

Jonathan Hernández Pérez, Yasuyo Inoue, Ayub Khan, Mandla Ntombela and Barbara Lison.

12.5 Incoming Governing Board 2023 - 2025

The members of the incoming Governing Board were introduced to the assembly:

Dilara Begum, Kirsten Boelt, Stuart Hamilton, Nthabiseng Kotsokoane, Silvia Stasselová, Te Paea Paringatai, Alejandro Santa, Loida Garcia-Febo, Jaap Naber, Leslie Weir, Vicki McDonald

12.6 IFLA #WLICWOW Award

The #WLICWOW competition asked delegates to submit a social media post that referenced the conference and gave voice to the experience of being here.

The WLICWOW winner for 2023 is Madiareni Sulaiman from Indonesia.

12.7 Carbon Footprint Challenge

An innovation in 2023 was the Carbon Footprint Challenge that invited delegates to calculate the carbon footprint of their route from their home, wherever the destination may be, all the way to Rotterdam Ahoy Convention Centre.

The winners were: Annie Kers, (The Netherlands); Britt-Marie Ingen-Ringselle, (Sweden); Talia Chung, (Canada).

12.8 Announcement of the WLIC 2024 location

The location for WLIC 2024 will be Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Two videos were shown.

12.10 Vote of thanks from WLIC 2023

The Chair of the IFLA WLIC 2023 National Committee presented the wrap-up of the conference and wished delegates a warm farewell.

12.11 Address by incoming President, Vicki McDonald

Outgoing President, Barbara Lison introduced incoming President, Vicki McDonald, and handed over a gavel, symbolising the handover of the stewardship of IFLA and the international library community.

Vicki thanked all those who worked on WLIC 2023 and made it such an outstanding success. Her priority was to move forward and to map out with the new Governing Board their legacy for the coming years. Future priorities included financial sustainability for the organisation, developing new partnerships and revenue streams, reviewing the congress model, assessing the governance structure that has been in place since 2021, developing a new strategy, and implementing engagement and communications with members.

She noted her presidential theme of *Stronger together* and committed to working with members and volunteers to ensure a strong, sustainable and future oriented IFLA.

13. Close of the Assembly

As President, Vicki McDonald then declared the 88th World Library and Information Congress closed.