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**Input for Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights Report:**   
Cultural Rights and the Governance of Development

**Response by**: The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)   
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1. **How are human rights generally integrated in your policies and programmes? Please indicate if human rights are mandatory considerations, at what stage of the programme they are integrated and if any, what kind of impact assessment and monitoring is done of their implementation.**

IFLA’s core values centre the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression, embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [[IFLA Statutes](https://cdn.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/ifla-statutes_2021-08-26_en.pdf) article 2.3].

All of IFLA activities are steered by these core values. The organisation’s engagement in development is informed by the belief that people, communities and organizations need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational, cultural, democratic and economic well-being.

The delivery of high quality library and information services for all people, with no discrimination, help guarantee that access. These services help enable free participation in cultural life of the community and for the benefits of science to be shared. Therefore, access to library services are a cultural right.

IFLA works to integrate an understanding of how libraries help drive sustainable development through the realisation of human and cultural rights, especially related to Article 19, into the wider perception of the missions of libraries.

IFLA monitors and reports on the status of information and expression in development through its professional programme, policy and advocacy programmes, and through its [Advisory Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression](https://www.ifla.org/units/faife/) (FAIFE).

IFLA’s [Advisory Committee on Cultural Heritage (CCH)](https://www.ifla.org/units/cch/) further explores and monitors topics relevant to cultural rights, such as repatriation of cultural property.

Advocacy outputs highlight key messages regarding the implementation and monitoring of issues related to fundamental freedoms and sustainable development.

IFLA and UNESCO’s Manifestos, including the recently released [2022 IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto](https://www.bing.com/search?q=public+library+amnifesto&cvid=0c6ea0d1c6c348179d8629283a223353&aqs=edge..69i57j0l3.2856j0j4&FORM=ANAB01&PC=DCTS), the [IFLA-UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto](https://www.ifla.org/ifla-unesco-multicultural-library-manifesto/), the [IFLA/UNESCO Manifesto for Digital Libraries](https://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-unesco-manifesto-for-digital-libraries/) and the planned updates for the IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto all center rights to access to information and knowledge, including culture, for the wellbeing of all.

1. **Please provide examples of any programmes that contribute to the respect, protection and implementation of cultural rights, in particular:**

* ***The right to choose and maintain one’s identity, and to take part in the cultural life of one’s choice***

With the overarching belief that access to information and freedom of expression are requirements for development, the work of IFLA’s relevant volunteer units seeks to advance the realisation of cultural rights in development through a multitude of library services.

The [Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section](https://www.ifla.org/units/mcultp/) promotes best practice in delivering library services and collections to cultural and linguistic minorities.

The Section also works to promote greater application of the principles and missions of multicultural libraries, as stated in the [IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto](http://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/731).

A recent example is the Section’s work on developing Library Guidelines for Displaced Populations, which centre the cultural and knowledge rights of migrants, which IFLA highlighted in a [recent consultation](https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/2573) to the Special Rapporteur for Cultural Rights.

The [Indigenous Matters Section](https://www.ifla.org/units/indigenous-matters/) promotes international cooperation in the fields of library, culture, knowledge and information services to indigenous communities that meet their intergenerational, community, cultural and language needs. Currently the Section is exploring the topic of repatriation of cultural property, strengthening ties to other Indigenous groups in the context of international decade for indigenous language, and working to enhance the LIS curriculum for Indigenous Librarianship.

The [LGBTQ+ Users Special Interest Group](https://www.ifla.org/units/lgbtq/) highlights the supporting role of libraries in building one’s identity and capacity by creating access to collections, safe spaces and services.

* ***The right to access, enjoy and transmit cultural heritage, including languages and ways of life;***

The protection of and access to cultural heritage, including documentary heritage, is a core activity of IFLA. The documentary heritage of the world informs our understanding of the past, transmits language, identity, and ways of life, and enables multicultural exchange.

IFLA’s active engagement with UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme seeks to help raise awareness of the importance of this body of cultural heritage in promoting inclusive, just, and peaceful societies.

The work of IFLA’s Advisory Committee on Cultural Heritage seeks to enhance the role of libraries in key issues related to the protection of cultural heritage. For example, the committee is currently monitoring global discourse on the repatriation of cultural property and initiating a discussion on how libraries factor in.

A number of IFLA’s Sections, including its Rare Books and Special Collections Section and the [Preservation and Conversation Centre hosted at Qatar National Library](https://www.ifla.org/pac-qatar/) are deeply engaged in countering theft and trafficking of documentary heritage. IFLA works to build capacity to counter trafficking , such as of books and manuscripts, as theft of this material also is theft of the ability to access, enjoy and transmit the cultural knowledge it contains.

The right to access, enjoy and transmit cultural heritage cannot be impeded by unduly restrictive or ambiguous laws which challenge the ability for libraries and cultural institutions to preserve and provide access to materials.

The recent report by IFLA’s Copyright & Legal Matters Advisory Committee (CLM), [Copyright & cross-border challenges in preservation](https://www.ifla.org/news/ifla-report-copyright-cross-border-challenges-in-preservation/), highlights how cross border cooperation is a central part of the work of libraries and cultural institutions in preserving and providing access to cultural heritage. It provides evidence of the challenges currently posed by copyright, and stresses that providing access internationally is vital to connecting people to cultural heritage, especially in post-colonial contexts.

* ***The right to access and transmit creative expressions and knowledge, and to access the creativity and knowledge of others;***

With the help of the FAIFE committee, IFLA made a [recent submission](https://www.ifla.org/news/why-the-right-of-access-to-information-matters-for-development/) to a call by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, “Freedom of Opinion and Expression and Sustainable Development – Why Voice Matters”. The submission stresses that access to information, including access to culture, is a driver of development, and that it must be universal.

The statement notes restrictions on the achievement of cultural rights include non-availability of information, language barriers, lack of connectivity, and paywalls. Further barriers include a lack of skills such as basic, digital, media and information literacy, a lack of awareness on the importance of culture, and a trend towards knowledge privatisation.

IFLA is a civil society partner of UNESCO, and takes part as an observer of the [2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of a Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005 Convention).](https://www.ifla.org/news/key-discussions-at-the-16th-session-of-the-intergovernmental-committee-for-the-protection-and-promotion-of-the-diversity-of-cultural-expressions/)

In the lead-up to the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (Mondiacult), IFLA engaged our global network in a ResiliArtxMondiacult Debate titled, [Library Voices Joining the Global Conversation on Cultural Rights](https://www.ifla.org/news/resiliart-x-mondiacult-library-voices-joining-the-global-conversation-on-cultural-rights/).

The [resulting report](https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/1911) of outcomes and recommendations, which ultimately informed IFLA’s [Mondiacult Side Event](https://www.ifla.org/news/ifla-brought-the-voice-of-libraries-to-the-unesco-world-conference-on-cultural-policies-and-sustainable-development-mondiacult-2022/) on linking culture and education.

IFLA’s professional programme considers various aspects of the right to access and transmit creative expressions and knowledge for all people.

Meanwhile, IFLA’s [Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section](https://www.ifla.org/units/lpd/) monitors implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind. The most recent report, published in February 2023, can be found [here](https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/2496).

IFLA also consider circumstances where freedoms are limited. For example, the [Library Services to People with Special Needs Section](https://www.ifla.org/units/lsn/) recently published a third edition of the [IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners](https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/123456789/2538/1/ifla-guidelines-for-library-services-to-prisoners_4th_ed-en.pdf).

These guidelines uphold that prisoners have a fundamental right to access information, read, and learn, and that prison libraries have an important role as educational, informational, cultural and recreational meeting and learning spaces for the entire prison community.

* ***The right to access to the benefits of science and its applications, including scientific knowledge, technology, and opportunities to contribute to the scientific enterprise;***

[IFLA’s 2022 statement on evidence for sustainable development](https://www.ifla.org/news/libraries-essential-in-providing-evidence-for-sustainable-development/) states that development is not possible without the creation, curation, preservation and application of evidence, understood as including data, information and knowledge.

This makes specific note of the key role that open access, science and scholarship have in ensuring the dissemination of information and enabling maximum involvement in research.

Libraries represent an essential link in the chain between those who are gathering or producing evidence and those applying it to policy. Specific roles include supporting research, managing date and dissemination, enabling sharing of and access to information, effective packaging of information for decisionmakers, and information preservation.

These roles, and the impact they have on cultural and scientific rights, are also reflected in the [2022 IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto](https://www.ifla.org/g/public-libraries/public-library-manifesto/). It states that public library missions include providing access to scientific knowledge, such as research results and health information, and enabling participation in scientific progress. IFLA is currently developing tools to help library professionals use this Manifesto as an advocacy tool to further support for and development of their library’s services.

IFLA’s advisory committee on [Copyright & Other Legal Matters](https://www.ifla.org/units/clm/), and other groups within IFLA, work to promote Open Access, Open Science, and other open initiatives as a means to narrow inequalities in information access globally and amongst institutions – and to enable researchers to communicate easily with their academic peers and find audiences for their work. CLM also works to encourage Intellectual Property (IP) policies that do not unduly restrict innovative scientific applications (such as Text & Data Mining).  In 2022 IFLA released [a statement supporting Open Access,](https://www.ifla.org/news/10-years-of-the-ifla-open-access-statement-a-call-to-action/) which updated its [2011 OA statement.](https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/2030)

* ***The right to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which one is the author;***

IFLA, both through its practical and advocacy work, promotes a balanced approach to copyright laws and policy. We underline and celebrate the contribution that libraries can make to supporting the dissemination of authors’ work, helping them to discover new readers and new markets, and stress that librarians must work within the law.

However, we believe that copyright frameworks should fully recognise the right of access, and oppose measures that jeopardise equity, creativity and use, now and in future.

* ***The right to take part in decision making processes that have an impact on one’s cultural life, including:***
  + ***the right of effective participation and consultation for minorities;***
  + ***the right to free, prior and informed consent by indigenous peoples and by local populations.***

IFLA’s vision includes libraries powering participatory societies. This applies also, of course, in the case of the design of libraries’ own services. An example can be found in IFLA’s work on International Guidelines for Library Services for Displaced Populations.

The Guidelines stress that services to migrant populations must be developed in partnership with these communities, listening to their needs and responding accordingly. The IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto further calls for cooperation with relevant user groups and professionals at local, national or international level.

This is also reflected in the actions of the Indigenous Matters Section, who encourage indigenous leadership in the sector. IFLA brings thought leaders together to highlight key consideration, for example in the [IFLA Journal Special Issue on Indigenous Librarianship](https://www.ifla.org/news/out-now-october-2021-issue-of-ifla-journal-special-issue-on-indigenous-librarianship/) (2021).

More broadly, IFLA underlines the role of libraries in supporting democratic participation, and so involvement in wider decision-making with an impact on cultural rights.

1. **Please provide recent examples of programmes, policies and commitments where:**

* ***sustainable development is discussed beyond wealth accumulation model;***

IFLA's overall approach to sustainable development is aligned with the overall UN vision of a model of progress that goes beyond pure growth, and focuses on the importance of the realisation of individual rights and potential.

In particular, IFLA has also been an active member of the [Culture 2030 Goal Campaign](https://culture2030goal.net/), and has released a [statement](https://www.ifla.org/news/time-to-deliver-culture-2030-goal-campaign-statement-on-the-follow-up-to-mondiacult-2022/) urging UNESCO Member States to make good on their commitment to promote an explicit culture goal in future development frameworks, as made in the declaration from MONDIACULT 2022

* ***cultural rights are mentioned and explained;***

IFLA has been engaging with the Special Rapporteur for Cultural Rights for the past years in an effort to strengthen awareness within the library field and beyond of the role of libraries as cultural rights defenders.

For example, a highlight of the World Library and Information Congress 2021 was a keynote address by past mandate-holder Karima Bennoune. The address [[transcript here](https://www.ifla.org/news/libraries-inspire-transcription-of-the-session-with-professor-karima-bennoune/)] has been a cornerstone of IFLA’s ongoing advocacy as it contextualises cultural rights for a library audience.

* ***cultural development is mentioned and explained;***

As mentioned, IFLA is a member of the steering group of the [Culture 2030 Goal Campaign](https://culture2030goal.net/), which works towards the wider recognition of cultural rights in the development agenda.

The campaign strives for the transversal impact of culture on sustainable development to be immediately recognised and calls for a culture-specific goal in the post-2030 development framework.

IFLA was closely involved in the production and advocacy around two recent outputs of this campaign, a [statement on the outcomes of Mondiacult 2022](https://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2023-03/EN_culture2030goal_declaration%20CultureGoalMondiacult_0.pdf) and a [zero-draft for a culture-specific development goal](https://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/culture2030goal_Culture%20Goal%20-%20ENG.pdf).

* ***the expression of cultural diversity is respected, protected and implemented;***

Within the framework of the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005 Convention), IFLA moderated a session on Culture and sustainable development at the 3rd Civil Society Forum in 2021. IFLA is currently participating among a diverse group of civil society organisations on the organisation of the 4th Civil Society Forum, which will be held in June 2023.

* ***marginalized voices and aspirations are identified and heard;***

Please refer to answers above.

* ***commitments to ensure that development is self-determined and community led are included;***

Please refer to answers above.

* ***commitments to take into account the local aspirations, values and priorities, rather than work on a one-size-fits-all model, are explicit;***

IFLA is a member of the steering committee of the [Climate Heritage Network](https://www.climateheritage.org). Part of the current [action plan](https://www.climateheritage.org/actionplan) of the network is stimulating engagement by cultural voices with key international climate policy issues. This, notably, is especially inclusive of marginalised voices, those of Indigenous and local communities, and making space for self-determined and community-led, culturally informed climate action.

IFLA is building on this work through engaging [libraries in Action for Climate Empowerment](https://www.ifla.org/news/looking-ahead-at-climate-action-in-2022/), which centres community participation, education, and access to information.

IFLA expanded its structure in 2021 to include an enhanced regional structure in order to make more localised impact, rather than a top-down approach. IFLA’s [Regional Division Committees](https://www.ifla.org/regional-divisions/) are engaging in a variety of advocacy work related to sustainable development that takes their region’s context and needs into consideration. See above for examples of participation in regional forums on sustainable development.

* ***commitments are made to ensure forward looking development.***

Please refer to answers above.

* ***Please provide information on any monitoring or evaluation mechanisms assessing the impacts of your development programmes or policies on cultural rights. Also please discuss any mechanism to submit complaints and seek reparation in cases of violations.***

IFLA monitors the engagement of its global membership in development issues, such as through the action plans of our volunteer committees. Specific tools, like the [Library Map of the World’s SDG Stories](https://librarymap.ifla.org/stories), help measure success in terms of promoting engagement with development through direct programming.

Looking externally, IFLA monitors larger policy and advocacy progress by reviewing monitoring mechanisms for positive trends related to libraries and calling attention to gaps.

**Note: Input on the additional questions for international, national and local civil society actors are summarised in the responses above.**