

CAPE TOWN DECLARATION

We, the Ministers and country representatives from Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D'Ivoire Lesotho, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan and Swaziland met to discuss the status of libraries and implementation of access to information agenda on 14 August 2015 in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa. The IFLA President, AfLIA President and national librarians were also present;

Deliberated on the status of libraries in the continent and the progress required to meet the global sustainable development goals;

Inspired by the principles enshrined in the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance and global sustainable development agenda;

Inspired by the level of commitment to prioritise and resource libraries as part of Africa Agenda 2063;

Aware that resources are still a challenge in most countries;

Mindful that libraries around the world are powerful knowledge partners in delivering services like literacy, ICT skills and local knowledge to communities;

Recognised that conflict, instability and underdevelopment on the continent, hinder free flow of information, skills transfer and people to people contacts;

Reminded that access to information is a universal human right and a basic tool for sustainable development;

Noted the need for the improvement of library services for the blind and people with sight impairment as well as other forms of impairment; and,

Welcomed the IFLA position regarding the post 2015 sustainable development agenda.

We thereby commit to:

Provide the necessary resources for the development of African libraries to respond to modern day challenges and provide access to emerging technologies;

Support the establishment of a Pan African library organisation to provide a platform for networking and resource mobilisation;

Encourage the establishment of institutional partnerships between libraries in the continent for exchange of knowledge and experiences;

Fast-track implementation of continental innovative strategies to improve ICT and knowledge management;

Encourage the implementation of fair and balanced copyright laws to facilitate access to information for all;

Fast-track the implementation of the outcomes of Library Summits held in 2011, 2013 and 2015 respectively;

Support the work of the African Library and Information Association and Institutions (AFLIA); and National Libraries, National Library Services, National Library Associations and Councils;

Encourage the use of e-books and virtual libraries more effectively to facilitate cultural and scientific exchange and encourage a culture of reading in the continent;

Promote library policies on access to information as part of a universal human rights approach as well as rights of people to knowledge;

Encourage the development and promotion of local content in African libraries as part of the promotion of African Renaissance and Pan Africanism;

Encourage the sharing of skills, collection and preservation of African stories from our own communities;

Commit that the African Ministers responsible for arts and culture, libraries and access to information will meet regularly;

Adopted In Cape Town, Republic of South Africa on 14 August 2015.