

**Preliminary Report on a
Project on Examining National Bibliographies, Planned by
IFLA Standing Committee on Bibliography In 1999**

Background

In 1999 the Standing Committee on Bibliography sat down a Working Group consisting of Barbara L. Bell, Wooster College, Ohio and Anne M.H. Langballe, National Library of Norway, Oslo Division, with the charge to:

- 1) Identify those national bibliographic services which are especially effective by virtue of their ability to meet the criteria and provide the features identified in ICNBS Recommendations 5-11 and
- 2) Identify those Services which could improve effectiveness through greater conformance to these Recommendations, suggesting ways to request that they implement ICNBS Recommendations.

In addition, Recommendation 1 (on deposit legislation) was later added to the charge, as this turned out to be useful in connection with the other points examined.

The Standing Committee suggested that the basis of the work be Barbara L. Bell's *An annotated guide to current national bibliographies*, München : Saur, 1998 and viewed it as a one year project with some funding from IFLA.

Working methods

Bell has spent Spring 2000 in Stellenbosch, the Republic of South Africa, Langballe in Oslo, Norway and our communication has been by e-mail and fax. As Bell was asked by the National Library of Norway to evaluate the Norwegian National Bibliography, we had a meeting on the IFLA Project during her stay in Norway in June.

We have divided the world between us in this way, considering the language difficulties:

Bell: Africa and Asia

Langballe: Europe, North America, Central America, South America, Caribbean, Australia.

The basis of the work has been Bell's Guide. In addition all printed bibliographies or CD-ROMs found in Oslo and Stellenbosch have been examined. All home pages of national libraries on the Internet have been searched for information on the national bibliography – these have been found through *Gabriel, the information service for the National Libraries of Europe*, IFLANET's list *Web Accessible National and Major Libraries* and search robots.

To a certain extent we have corresponded with national libraries to get more information. We have decided not to contact all national bibliographies in order to be able to answer all details of recommendations 5-11. As Bell's Guide was published in 1998 and the volumes she examined usually were published some years earlier, some national bibliographies may have undergone changes we are not aware of.

By July 2000 the bibliographies of Africa, Europe, Central and South America, and some Asian and Caribbean countries are examined. Some of these (and probably some from the remaining countries) have to be seen in Sweden and the United States in the autumn; the project funding will be used to enable us to do this.