The Launch 2008
IFLA Regional Office for Africa
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Hosting the
IFLA Regional Office for Africa

Introduction

After 20 years of service, the IFLA Regional Office at the Library of the University of Dakar (Senegal) was closed on 31 December 2006 at the retirement of the then Regional Manager, Mr Henri Sène.

On 21st August, 2006, IFLA announced that its new Regional Office in Africa was going to be established in Pretoria, at UNISA. This would be for an initial 3 year period.

A Regional Office (RO) can be instrumental in maintaining and improving the relations with the library and information professions in the African continent. We at UNISA count it as a privilege to play that role on behalf of IFLA and the Library Profession in Africa.
How was the Office selected?

In November 2006, IFLA headquarters sent out a call for bids for institutions in Africa to host the Regional Office for Africa. A number of institutions from across the African continent submitted bids. UNISA was one of them.

The criteria for the bid included some of the following:

1. The location has to have good and easy traffic connections and thus has to be situated in the vicinity of a major international airport.

2. The location has to be connected to good and reliable telecom connections.

3. The location has to be situated within one of the countries of the African continent which has good opportunities for a high level of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.

4. The host organisation needs to be a Member in good standing of IFLA, with a history of participation in IFLA activities.

5. The host organisation has to provide the RO with serviced accommodation, including good telecom facilities.

6. The senior management of the host organisation should express its interest and support (including a degree of financial support) for hosting the RO.

The following specific criteria apply:

7. The RO for Africa has to have strong support from the African library community in general and IFLA members in the region, in particular from:
   a. National Library Associations in the region
   b. IFLA Institutional Members in the region.

8. Africa is large and so is the number of libraries in the continent. There should be great growth potential for (Institutional) IFLA members in this part of the world and therefore the African RO has to commit to a special recruitment target.

Many institutions met those criteria. What we believe tipped the bid in our favour was

1. We had the support of LIASA
2. We had the support of GEALIC
3. We had the support from the Principal’s Office. The University saw this as an occasion to be of service to Africa, in line with our vision. When the bid was won, it was announced at a Management Meeting. The agreement was signed by the Principal and Vice Chancellor, Prof Pityana, and Dr Peter Lor, the Secretary General of IFLA.

Role of IFLA’s Regional Manager

The Regional Office is run by a Regional Manager. UNISA will appoint a person to fill that role. S/he can be seen as a permanent representative of IFLA/HQ in the region, whose activities consist of activities that promote IFLA, supporting our Regional Section for Africa, the Management of Library Associations Section, the IFLA/ALP Core Activity, as well as other Sections and Core Activities.

The Regional Manager and IFLA/HQ maintain permanent contacts with regard to any matters of concern to the African region. IFLA/HQ supports the Regional Manager by making promotion material, leaflets etc. available.

The Regional Manager performs the following activities:

1. Work with the Standing Committees of the Africa Section, with the Coordinating Board of the Regional Division (8) and supporting it in carrying out IFLA activities in the region; collaborate with other IFLA Regional Managers in the geographic regions concerned.

2. Work with the Management of Library Associations Section’s Standing Committee, the Standing Committees of the Africa and Asia/Oceania Sections and with the
Coordinating Board of the Regional Division (8) to support library associations in the region.

3. Work with the Action for Development through Libraries Programme (ALP) Core Activity, mainly on ALP-sponsored projects in Africa.

4. Disseminate information about IFLA in the region.

5. Provide logistical and administrative support to any IFLA activities in the region, e.g. by (co-)organising meetings and managing meeting budgets.

6. Organise communication, both with IFLA/HQ and within the region (newsletter, IFLANET, listservs).

7. Seek sources for funding for IFLA projects.

8. Liaise with and other IFLA professional units with regard to activities in the region.

9. Recruit IFLA members.

10. Assist African IFLA members with election procedures (President, Governing Board members, and Standing Committee members): encouraging nominations and voting.

The Regional Office and African library associations

For South Africa as the host of the Regional Office, it is imperative that there is close liaison between the National Association, LIASA together with all African Associations in the continent, collaboration and joint activities that will promote our profession.

We as the Regional Office are available to speak about IFLA and what it does, and the opportunities it presents to our profession. We are available to act as a clearinghouse for Africa.

We are available as facilitators for the African LIS community global connection.

Dr. Buhle Mbabu-Thata
Chair, Africa Section
UNISA Library Services
South Africa

IFLA Regional Office for Africa moves to Pretoria

The IFLA Office in Pretoria is a permanent representative of IFLA/HQ in Africa. Its role is to promote IFLA, support IFLA’s Africa Section and liaise with IFLA/HQ. The office is manned by Ms Lindy Nhlapo as Regional Manager.

Other responsibilities include:
- active membership recruitment
- co-organising regional IFLA events in cooperation with other IFLA professional units (Sections and Core Activities)
- Information dissemination
- more effective communication
- representing IFLA to give it more visibility amongst the African professional community

The Regional Manager is responsible for, amongst other things:
- membership recruitment
- source funding
- information dissemination about IFLA in the region
- to organise communication between IFLA/HQ and the region (newsletter and listservs)
- to give support and assist African IFLA members with election procedures
I felt honored and humbled by the gesture of being a Regional Manager for Africa. I thank Unisa Library Service Management for having confidence in me. I promise to do my best to serve the LIS community in Africa. I will also uphold Unisa as the “African University in the service to humankind”.

**Prof MC Maré**

Madame Programme Director, I am delighted to welcome you all to this great occasion of the official launch of the IFLA AFRICA Regional Office at Unisa. Special word of welcome is extended to the guests of honour.

The launch of the IFLA AFRICA Regional Office at the Unisa Library constitutes an important milestone in the history of this great Institution. This University strives to be the African University in the service of Humanity. Hosting the IFLA AFRICA Regional Office is an important step towards reaching this vision.

The question what it actually means to be an African University is and will remain for the foreseeable future the subject of intellectual discourse and debate. In 2005 a Task Team led by Prof Tinyeko Maluleke hosted a conference on Africanisation, the outcomes of which served before the Executive of Senate in 2007. While acknowledging that much still need to be done to contextualise African philosophy and culture at Unisa, the Executive Committee of Senate accepted the outcomes of the conference as the first basic steps towards Africanisation of our academic offerings and research output.

These principles of Africanisation include the location and contextualisation of academic offerings within the African continent, collaboration with African Universities, addressing the problems of Africa in our tuition and research and including the work of African scholars and African or indigenous knowledge systems.

In implementing these principles, the University needs partnerships and collaborators. The Regional Office of IFLA AFRICA can play an important role in this regard, in providing networks across Africa, in providing excellent and technology enhanced library and information systems and services throughout Africa and by documenting and protecting indigenous knowledge systems.

The Unisa library and IFLA should thus be congratulated for their vision in establishing this Office at the Unisa Library.
It is with a great sense of pride and achievement that I stand here today to represent LIASA on this historic occasion of the launch of the IFLA Africa Regional Office in South Africa. Our sense of achievement stems from the fact that South Africa is hosting our IFLA Regional Office. Our pride comes from the fact that both the chair of the Africa Section as well as the regional manager are LIASA members. This is indeed an important milestone in the history of LIASA and our country. Last year LIASA hosted a memorable IFLA conference attended by over 1,600 African delegates. Today I take the opportunity to welcome once more our IFLA Africa Section delegates who will spend the entire weekend deliberating on issues affecting libraries in Africa. Hearty congratulations for being elected to serve in the IFLA Africa section.

Allow me to congratulate in a special way the Chair of the IFLA Africa Section, Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata, who is also a member of LIASA. We would like to wish her well in her daunting task ahead. LIASA would like to reassure delegates that the IFLA Africa Section is in the good hands of a great leader.

Let me also congratulate Dr James Daniel who was elected the secretary of the IFLA Africa Section. As the secretary he is the live-wire of the committee. Congratulations and best wishes with your secretarial duties which should produce the sparks to keep the committee active and vibrantly alive. Congratulations!

When LIASA was informed that Unisa had won the bid to host their IFLA Africa Regional Office for the next three years, we felt proud, honoured and privileged. LIASA takes this opportunity to congratulate the management of Unisa for hosting the office and for awaiting the resources to do so. Unisa is well-known in Africa and abroad. The IFLA Africa Section is also well-known in Africa and abroad among library and information professionals. This was a perfect match. Congratulations to Unisa for preparing a winning bid. Let me also thank the IFLA Africa Section for selecting Unisa as host. Your decision was a huge vote of confidence in LIASA, Unisa and South Africa. LIASA pledges its full support and will assist in whatever way it can to ensure that your plans and programmes to promote library and information services in Africa succeed.

LIASA also congratulates the new IFLA Regional Manager, Ms Lindy Nhlapo, who is not only a member but a leader within LIASA, as Rep Council Member. Congratulations Lindy on your appointment. We are proud of you and wish you well in your new responsibilities. We are aware that through your office you are the representative of IFLA headquarters in Africa. You are our vital link with IFLA. You are following in the footsteps of great African Leaders who continue to serve with pride.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the previous IFLA Africa Section Regional Manager, Henri Senne, who managed the regional office for twenty-two years. He has served the office with dedication and distinction. LIASA thanks him and wishes him well in his retirement.

This launch of the IFLA Regional Office in South Africa brought great excitement and hope. It is obvious that LIASA stands to benefit a great deal. One of the objectives of the Africa Section is to promote and strengthen library associations in Africa. With the chair and regional manager being members of LIASA, charity begins at home. They have to think globally but act locally. LIASA is challenged to be looking at its best to impress the regional office. We are certainly looking
forward to working closely with the IFLA Africa Section because our libraries in South Africa are faced with the same challenges. Together we must hold hands to seek solutions to our African challenges while linking up with the rest of the work through the IFLA Africa Regional Office. We are quite excited that the IFLA Africa Section itself is our platform for sharing expertise, exchanging ideas and experiences.

We are truly grateful to all colleagues who were elected last year to serve in the IFLA Africa Section. We wish them the best in their deliberations during this weekend. Going through their strategic plans for 2008 - 2009, I was impressed by their six goals which touch right at the core of the challenges facing libraries in Africa.

- The Library Associations in Africa need to be developed and strengthened because the library and information profession which is often referred to as the aging profession, needs to claim its rightful place at the heart of society.
- Programmes for informal reading and literacy need attention.
- The digital divide gap needs to be narrowed.
- Library professionals in Africa need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills of functioning effectively in the knowledge economy.
- The indigenous knowledge of Africa needs to be documented and preserved and attention be given to issues around intellectual property and copyright.

These are the issues impacting on libraries in Africa and they are close to our hearts. Good luck in your deliberations this weekend. We are honoured to host you in South Africa. LIASA once more pledges its support to the Africa Regional Office.

**Congratulations and best wishes.**
Robert J Pearce, from the UNISA Library, extolled the African Diaspora in a poem specially written for the launch of the IFLA Regional Office for Africa.

The Afrikan Diaspora

(Poem written for the launch of the IFLA Regional Office for Africa; Unisa Library 15 February 2008)

With competent dispersed compatriots at the helm,
They will succeed and reach their goals

As there is method in madness,
So there is unity in dispersion and those scattered Afrikans

Form the Invisible Intellectual College
To steer Librarianship as the Afrikan Diamond Ship
Shining for the West to view just as Obama there Son Is shining in Foreign land

God bless Afrika and her Children
The Black Children and the White Children

But more the Dispersed Children that shall inherit the earth
Bless the Children of the Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Somalia.

Let them inherit the Diamond, Oil and Gold-rich African Soil
Let them inherit the plush green hills of Afrika that stretch from East to West, Central South and North

Bless the Librarians and Information workers that so untierelessly slave to educate the world and provide the right information for the right user at the right time

Let me end and with assistance from so many Afrikan praise Singers like Ngugi, Soyinka and Mphahlele before, Let me sing the praises and shout: Halla Ifla Africa Regional Office Halla!

Long Live!
UNISA launched the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Africa Regional Office at a function on Muckleneuk campus on 15 February 2008. IFLA is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users, and has 1 700 members in 150 countries around the world.

An IFLA Africa Regional Office was established at the library of the University of Dakar, Senegal, and was hosted there for more than twenty years before closing at the end of 2006. A regional office is instrumental in maintaining and improving the relations with the library and information professions in the African continent and UNISA is proud to announce that the Muckleneuk campus will be the home of the Africa Regional Office for the next three years.

Mr Sjoerd Koopman, Co-ordinator of Professional Activities at IFLA Headquarters, was upbeat about the new office. “The IFLA regional office for Africa is a representation of Headquarters in Africa and Tshwane.” On behalf of IFLA he said that the Association was looking forward to the collaboration.

Goodwill messages were also delivered by a number of invited guests:

Mr John Tsebe, Department of Education and Culture, NEPAD, representing the National Library of South Africa: The Unisa library has been a leader in the profession for many years.

Ms Rachel More, Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) President Elect: We congratulate Unisa on having the vision for hosting this office.

Ms Helena Asamoah-Hassan, IFLA board member: We at the IFLA Africa Section believe that good things are going to come out of this union.

Mr Felix Ubogu, Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium (GAELIC): This is an honour for the region and the country.

Conveying congratulations from IFLA Headquarters, Mr Sjoerd Koopman
Professors Maré and Mosoma, Mr Koopman, Members of the Executive Committee of the IFLA Africa Section, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am giving this goodwill message on behalf of Dudu Nkosi, the current Chairperson of GAELIC (Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium).

GAELIC is an academic library consortium founded in April 1996, and it is a permanent project of FOTIM (Foundation of Tertiary Institution of the Northern Metropolis). The members of GAELIC include the 9 universities in Gauteng Province and environs, the University of Botswana and the University of Namibia.

I can confidently say that the members of GAELIC are paid up members of IFLA.

GAELIC is delighted that the IFLA Regional Office for Africa will be hosted in South Africa for the next three years. We feel that this is a great honour for the country and for the region. GAELIC strongly encouraged UNISA to put in a bid for the office and we are delighted that this was successful.

UNISA has been prominent in the training and development of librarians as well as the delivery of library and information services nationally and regionally, and in the continent and beyond. It has thus contributed to the knowledge pool of the continent. UNISA is sensitive to international librarianship in many ways. And it is indeed fitting that UNISA should host the IFLA regional office for Africa.

In recent years, the IFLA Africa Section has garnered more participants from libraries and professionals in the continent. This has largely been through the efforts of the leaders of the Section. We hope that the IFLA Regional Office for Africa will bring on board further initiatives to strengthen the successes achieved so far.

On behalf of the GAELIC Governing Board and GAELIC, I would like to welcome the IFLA Office and to pledge the support of GAELIC.
Let us assume that NOT everyone in the audience knows what IFLA is: therefore an introductory statement about this:

- IFLA - the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions – is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

- IFLA provides information specialist throughout the world with a forum for exchanging ideas and promoting international cooperation, research and development in all fields of library activity and information service.

- IFLA is one of the means through which libraries, information centres, and information professionals worldwide can formulate their goals, exert their influence as a group, protect their interests, and find solutions to global problems.

- Our Federation, which was founded in 1927, currently has more than 1 600 members in 150 countries: associations, institutions and individuals, from widely divergent cultural backgrounds. They are working together to further the goals of the Federation and to promote librarianship on a global level. Through our formal membership, IFLA directly or indirectly represents some 500 000-600 000 library and information professionals worldwide.

- Library and information professionals gather annually at the IFLA World and Information Congress, held in August each year in cities around the world. In 2007: Durban!

- IFLA’s Headquarters office has – since 25 years! – generously been hosted by the Royal Library, the Dutch national library, in The Hague, Netherlands.

- Although the world is getting smaller thanks to modern communication, one cannot clearly do all the work of running the Federation from a small office in Europe: in that respect the world is too big!

In order to reach out to its membership – and indeed to the profession as a whole – in various parts of the world, IFLA established a number of Regional Offices, back in the 1980’s.

- Currently they are based in Singapore (for Asia and Oceania) and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (for Latin America and the Caribbean).

- The IFLA Regional Office for Africa was established at the University Library of Dakar, Senegal. It was hosted there for more than 20 years, but had to close at the end of 2006. A call was put out across this continent in search of a new host for this office. In good cooperation with IFLA’s Africa Section, the Library of the University of South Africa was selected from among number of applications.

- Full cooperation was sought from UNISA and strong support was promised, so in August 2007, during our IFLA Congress in Durban, IFLA could announce that the
IFLA Regional Office for Africa would be based here. An agreement was signed on the spot.

- The IFLA Office in Pretoria can be seen as permanent representative of IFLA/HQ in Africa and has as its duties to promote IFLA, support IFLA’s Africa Section and liaise with IFLA/HQ. Among the priorities of the Office are:

1. Active membership recruitment.
2. (Co-)organising regional IFLA events.
3. Disseminate information about IFLA within the region.
4. Contribute to more effective communication both within the African professional communities and with other IFLA bodies.
5. Representing IFLA in the African professional community, in a pursuit to make IFLA more visible, promoting IFLA goals, principles and core values.

I thank you.

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**Congratulatory Messages**

**Myra E Boyes**
Librarian
(Engen Petroleum Ltd)

May I wish you all success on the day and for the future.

Best regards

**Benny Phaladi**
Head: Library & Information Services (Rand Water)

Compliments to you – Lindi!!
It is always a good feeling to have and to have known somebody who is remarkably making a professional success in the ever changing library and information industry landscape. Through you – LIASA GSB is making its strides in the globalised active LIS professionalism and your contribution through IFLA; Africa Regional Office is even making the playing fields in the profession even flatter and levelled. This goes to show that South African LIS industry is also counted in the today’s flatten-world platform and LIS industry worldwide. The whole world has witnessed South Africa hosting IFLA WLC Conference last year – and your appointment to serve in this new professional challenge deployment and of course other country men and women serving in other different professional capacities at the IFLA is a sign of success of LIASA in a globalised world.

We are indeed honoured to have you within our mist, to salute and enjoy your success with you!! Well done sister!!!

Best regards!!

**Maria Digoamaje**
Manager: Outreach and Marketing
(City of Jhb : Region F)

Lindi is the one person to be proud of. She has proven to us that hard work, perseverance and consistency is the recipe of success. Well done my dear sister and my mentor. I salute you.

**Busi Dlamini**

I am positive that 2008 is going to be a good year.
I wish to congratulate Lindi Nhlapo for her appointment to the IFLA: Africa Regional Office which is hosted by Unisa. This is an achievement for Lindi, the Branch and the LIASA as well. Lindi, we are proud of you and we know that you will represent us with dignity and honour.

**Karin Marais**
Principal Librarian
(South African Weather Service)

Congratulations with the winning of the bid.
Juliano Musakalu Kabamba
Senior Director; Library and Information Centre Central University of Technology, (Free State)

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate UNISA for winning the bid.

Sibusiso Victor Ndaba
UJ LIC APK
Shared & Support Services

Dear Lindi
Congratulations!!! I do not have to wish you well in what you’d be doing in IFLA, I know you’ll excel.

The Launch in Pictures

Programme Director,
Dr. Judy Henning (UNISA)

Prof. JB Ojiamo from Kenya, Africa Section SC member with Noel Shillinglaw of Unisa Library

Africa Section Chair,
Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thata with Matseliso M Moshoeshoe-Chadzingwa, Africa Section SC Member & Felix Ubogu, Director of Wits Library

Africa Section,
Colleen Mogane, Director of Gauteng Legislature Information Services and Felix Ubogu of Wits Library

Marketing Manager, Hetta Pieterse far left (Unisa Press)
Marie Botha, Unisa Library with librarians from Durban University of Technology. Oscar Manamela in the background waiting for the next guest to collect their goodies.

Regional Manager for Africa, Lindi Nhlapo far right with colleagues waiting to usher guests and IFLA colours reverberating in the background

IFLA Governing Board Member and outgoing Africa Section Chair sharing words of wisdom, Helena Asamouh – Hassan

John Tsebe, National Librarian also congratulating UNISA for winning the bid

IFLA AFRICA WALL BANNER