

**International Conference
Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace
(Yakutsk, Russian Federation, 2-4 July 2008)**

Final document

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The International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace was held under UNESCO auspices in Yakutsk, Russian Federation, from July 2 to July 4, 2008. This conference represents the Russian Federation's contribution to the United Nations International Year of Languages.

The Conference was organized by the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Russian Federation's Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, the UNESCO Moscow Office, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Program, the Interregional Center of Library Cooperation, the National Library of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and the Committee of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for UNESCO.

The Conference gathered more than 100 representatives from 15 countries and all continents—leaders and staff members of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations, government bodies, agencies and institutions of culture, education, research, information and communications, business, civil society and the mass media, as well as political and community leaders and leading experts.

The Conference discussed the political, cultural, social, ethical and technological aspects of research and development of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace, and examined issues related to the use of information and communication technologies to safeguard all languages.

The participants held three plenary meetings and five thematic sections: Political, Ethical and Legal Aspects of the Development of Multilingualism in Cyberspace; The Internet and Other Media; The Role of Libraries in the Preservation of Linguistic Diversity; Languages and Education; and The Preservation and Development of Cultural Diversity.

In concluding its work, the Conference agreed on the following resolution:

The participants of the International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace (Yakutsk, Russian Federation, July 2-4, 2008),

1. Recalling the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted at the 31st session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2001, which says that “cultural diversity as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity is just as indispensable for humanity as biological diversity for Nature, and is a treasure shared by the entire human race”,

2. Recalling further the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, adopted at the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2003,

3. Taking into account the key documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) - Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action (first phase in Geneva, 2003) and Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (second phase in Tunis, 2005) - which all emphasize the importance of the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity and suggest a set of measures necessary to achieve this goal,

4. Emphasizing the need to continue preserving multilingualism because languages are stores of a rich and vast amount of human heritage and knowledge, as well as necessary instruments for social life, the expression and dissemination of social and cultural traditions, self-identification and preservation of human dignity of their speakers,

5. Recognizing that the dissemination of multilingual information on the history, languages and culture of different nations contributes to the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding and guarantees a peaceful sustainable development of the contemporary civilization,

6. Taking into account that the current absence of certain languages in cyberspace contributes to the widening of the already existing digital information gap,

7. Considering that the already existing information and communication technologies offer new opportunities for the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage for equal and universal access to knowledge,

8. Bearing in mind the messages of the Director General of UNESCO at the occasions of the International Year of Languages in 2008, the World Day for Cultural Diversity, for Dialogue and Development on May 21, and the International Mother Language Day on February 21,

9. Thanking the Director General of UNESCO for his message at the opening of the current International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace,

10. Thanking also the Government and the people of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for their hearty hospitality, which ensured the success of the Conference,

Consider it necessary:

- (a) to use every opportunity to promote the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace and elsewhere;
- (b) to stress the importance of implementing the Recommendations of
 - the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005),

- the International Conference “UNESCO between Two Phases of the World Summit on the Information Society” (St. Petersburg, 2005), in particular action C8 (Cultural Diversity and Cultural Identity, Linguistic Diversity and Local Content), and
 - the thematic meeting on “Multilingualism for Cultural Diversity and Participation of All in Cyberspace”, organized by UNESCO in preparation for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Bamako, Mali, 2005);
- (c) to invite the UNESCO Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Program to examine the possibility of creating an expert group on multilingualism in cyberspace;
- (d) to suggest to UNESCO and MAAYA (World Network for Linguistic Diversity) to convene a World Summit on Linguistic Diversity in Cyberspace;
- (e) to support the ACALAN (African Academy of Languages) and MAAYA initiative for a World Forum on Multilingualism.

Suggest in particular,

- (f) to invite all interested organizations and private persons to contribute to the UNESCO website “Languages Matter!”, dedicated to the International Year of Languages, and to the discussion forum “Communication and Information”, organized by UNESCO as a follow-up to the decisions of the World Summit on the Information Society in action line C8 (Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity and Local Content), by placing information on their own projects in support of linguistic diversity;
- (g) to invite the national committees of the UNESCO Information for All Program to elaborate indigenous and minority linguistic programs promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace;
- (h) to call the attention of governmental and other organizations regulating television, radio and mobile telephones environments to the necessity of considering the opportunity of using the latest technologies for broadcasting in minority languages during the media switch to digital broadcasting;
- (i) to continue searching for fair and balanced solutions between the international copyright and intellectual property legislation and regulatory frameworks for the formation of digital libraries responsible for cultural and linguistic diversity;
- (j) to increase support for libraries, museums and archives in the access to and preservation of multilingualism and dissemination of information representing cultural and linguistic diversity;

- (k) to promote the elaboration and dissemination of relevant free/libre open source software, fonts and other technical means necessary for the use of languages in cyberspace;
- (l) to promote the elaboration and dissemination of a unified and universally accessible set of fonts and diacritic marks supporting the languages of all cultural groups in the Russian Federation, along with Unicode enhancements as necessary;
- (m) to continue promoting the activities aimed at documenting, preserving and developing languages, mainly minority languages, through the latest information technologies;
- (n) to continue promoting the elaboration of multilingual thesauri and dictionaries and the inclusion of minority languages into internationally accepted thesauri on cultural heritage such as UNESCO, HEREIN, ICONCLASS, Getty, Garnier etc.;
- (o) to continue the study of ethical aspects of the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace, and their consideration in the activities aimed at preserving and promoting such diversity;
- (p) to step up activities for the introduction, promotion and enhancement of minority languages in the educational systems and the expansion of their application and use (in the government sector, the sphere of research and art, on television, radio, etc.);
- (q) to suggest to the participating countries the monitoring of language diversity on the Internet;
- (r) to extend international cooperation with all interested organizations including the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) and the International Indigenous Librarians Forum (IILF);
- (s) to invite the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) to consider establishing a competence centre for the study and promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace and for sharing its experiences with the world at large.