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REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

IFAP activities in the last two years were guided by three documents: the Decision taken by the Council during its previous session, the Strategic Plan for 2008-2013 and the Work Plan for 2009. And they have pursued two major goals: to do as much substantive work as possible in areas covered by the Strategic Plan, and to review and redefine, where necessary, the way IFAP is positioned within UNESCO, and the roles and functions of particular IFAP bodies. This second field is less spectacular but very important in providing an answer to the question that the Council formulated two years ago about the modalities of IFAP's operation in the future.

If the Council during its current meeting approves the documents submitted to it, and these are then implemented, I think we will be able to say that we have achieved considerable success in pursuing these two main goals. However, this should only be taken as the beginning of a new stage in IFAP's history. The challenge now is to build on the work done in the last two years and to ensure follow-up. I hope that when the Council meets in 2012, a year before the expiry of the current Strategic Plan, it will be clear to everyone that IFAP is capable of sustained, effective and successful pursuit of its objectives and provides added value that UNESCO cannot do without. That should lay the foundations for IFAP's continued development beyond 2013.

In this report, I will concentrate on three main issues: the work done in the last biennium; efforts to define more precisely relations between IFAP and UNESCO generally; and efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of IFAP by more clearly defining the roles and tasks of particular IFAP bodies.

1. THE WORK OF THE LAST BIENNIUM

Helping Member States develop and implement national information policies and knowledge strategies

UNESCO General Conference resolution 34 C/Resolution.48 for Major Programme V, contained in the Approved Programme and Budget 2008–2009 (34 C/5) authorized the Director General to “assist in the formulation of national information policy frameworks, in particular within the framework of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)”. This was the main focus of IFAP's activities in the last biennium, in line with UNESCO's decision to concentrate on “upstream policy work”.

Based on recommendations developed by an informal working group comprising Brazil, Hungary and Nigeria, the following body of work was achieved:

- Preparation of a 150-page document: National Information Society Policy: A Template (contractor: Fundación Gestión y Desarrollo, Argentina) designed to assist UNESCO Member States in the development, updating and refinement of what the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society calls “appropriate, comprehensive, forward-looking and sustainable national e-strategies, including ICT strategies and sectoral e-strategies as appropriate, as an integral part of national development plans and poverty reduction strategies”. The document will be published in book form in English and French.
- Establishment of an online IFAP Information Society Observatory (<http://ifap-is-observatory.ittk.hu/>) continuously updated with new, relevant strategic documents, events, books and experiences, annotations and links, following developments in the field. The observatory provides building blocks for the development of such information society development policies and strategies, by making accessible up-to-date information grouped, in the first instance, around the IFAP priority areas: information for development; information accessibility; information literacy; information ethics and information preservation.

- Publication of five Information Society Observatory Newsletters, updating users on new entries and additions to the observatory;
- Publication of Information Society Policies. Annual World Report, a 60-page document summarizing latest trends, fresh approaches and experiences, new phenomena and concepts, and the important features and patterns of different practices worldwide (the contractor for the last three items was the Information Society Research Institute of the Budapest University of Technology).

Working Groups

In its Decision taken during the 2008 session, the Council endorsed information for development, information literacy, information preservation, information ethics and information accessibility as the five specific IFAP priorities, and requested the Bureau to establish multistakeholder Working Groups to deal with the five IFAP priorities, based on terms of reference and modalities of operation developed together with the Secretariat and approved by the Council in an online consultation.

Initial efforts were launched to create four of these Working Groups. In two cases, they have produced tangible results.

The **Information Preservation WG** has been formed by Mr Dietrich Schueller, IFAP Bureau member. It is composed of members of the the MoW subcommittee on Technology (“SCoT”); representatives from libraries and archives and their NGOs (IFLA, ICA; IASA), including personalities of political and strategic competence; and representatives from the private sector. Its Terms of Reference have been submitted to the Council for approval.

As envisaged under the Strategic Plan, the IP WG will provide a supplement to the document National Information Society Policy: A Template with a chapter on information preservation. In April 2009, the IP WG prepared and submitted to the Director General comments on the Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage and the possible need to draft another standard-setting instrument, with structural recommendations regarding Articles 1, 8 and 12 of the Charter.

The WG has also taken under consideration a document Nitrate Won't Wait: Notes to the Preservation and Digitalisation of the Nitrate-Film Heritage of the World, which was prepared by the Hungarian Foundation for Information Society on December 2009 and conveyed to the Bureau by Mr Laszlo Karvalics, the Hungarian member of the Bureau. As this report was being written, the Group had not yet expressed an opinion on the document.

The **Information Ethics WG** has not been formally constituted, but its role has been played by an informal online working group (including participants from the Czech Republic, Canada; Egypt; France; Sudan and Poland, and assisted by Constance Bommelaer of the Internet Society and by Professor Luciano Floridi of the UNESCO Chair in Information and Computer Ethics at the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom) that may later be transformed into a full-fledged Information Ethics WG. The group, chaired temporarily by Mr Karol Jakubowicz of Poland, developed a draft Code of Ethics for the Information Society.

The **Information Literacy WG**, under the leadership of Professor Fay Durrant, Rapporteur of the Bureau, developed its Terms of Reference, subsequently approved by the Council. As Professor Durrant was unable to continue leading the WG, Professor Divina Frau-Meigs of France volunteered to lead the group. Its activities have yet to be launched.

Initial efforts to establish the **Information for Development WG** were undertaken by Mr Theophilus Mlaki of Tanzania, IFAP Council member, but his ill health prevented further progress.

One of the National IFAP Committees volunteered to initiate the process of establishing the **Information Accessibility WG**, but later felt unable to continue the effort.

National IFAP Committees

Efforts in this area have served a number of goals: establishing the number of active Committees, establishing contacts with them, enhancing their work and cooperation, as well as updating and developing guidelines for their establishment and operation, to assist any new committees and developing ways of recognizing outstanding projects by the National Committees (see section 3 “Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of IFAP”).

In June 2008, a questionnaire was sent out to IFAP National Committees to obtain basic information about them. This followed a similar exercise in 2006, when only two replies were received. By the end of 2008, the new questionnaire elicited 20 responses from IFAP National Committees in Austria, China, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, France, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

A major development has been the First Consultation Meeting of IFAP National Committees (Moscow, 7-8 December, 2008), organized by the Intergovernmental Council for IFAP, the UNESCO Secretariat, the Russian IFAP Committee and its working body – the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre – with support of the Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. It was attended by representatives of 17 National IFAP Committees from Austria, Chile, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Lithuania, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Thailand, and of Moldova, whose IFAP Committee was being established at the time.

The meeting provided an opportunity for a wide-ranging review of the activities of National IFAP Committees, as well as for a thorough discussion of key issues (Implementing the IFAP Template for National Information Society Policy; Prospects for new synergies and enhanced multilateral collaborations in the framework of IFAP; Publicity and visibility; Funding). This served as the point of departure for developing two documents: Guidelines for the establishment and operation of National IFAP Committees as well as a draft Council decision that IFAP should recognize each year activities or projects of National IFAP Committees that best contribute to the promotion of Information for All in the five priority areas of IFAP: information for development, information literacy, information preservation, information ethics and information accessibility (see section 3 “Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of IFAP”).

The Moscow meeting also provided an additional opportunity, in addition to the above-mentioned questionnaire, to review activities by National IFAP Committees. All the information obtained is included in the report of the meeting.

IFAP contribution to the pursuit of the global goal of Information for All

Mention could be made here of activities related to IFAP financed under document 34 C/5, as submitted by the advisors for communication and information of the CI Sector in field offices.

1. An Information Literacy Workshop in the Caribbean “Developing Information Literacy Skills and Programmes,” organized by the University of West Indies and UNESCO;
2. An International Conference on “Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”, held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation, in July 2008;
3. Assistance to reform the library sector of the Republic of Moldova and establish the Republic of Moldova Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme;

4. Information for All Workshop organized by Oman National Commission Office and National Documentary and Archive Centre;
5. Information for All workshop organized in Kuwait in cooperation with the Kuwait National Commission Office and Kuwait National Information Centre.
6. Information Ethics and e-Government High-Level Executive Seminar followed by a training workshop, co-organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the International Centre for Information Ethics and the Government of South Africa, co-sponsored in the framework of UNESCO's Information for All Programme (Pretoria, 23-26 February, 2009).

Another activity under this heading has been "IFAP Success Stories": by way of an incentive, the Bureau of IFAP has agreed to provide project funding support of US \$5,000 for up to five of the most innovative success stories, one in each UNESCO region (Africa, Arab States, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific). The purpose of this support is to help expand the reach of the most successful initiatives to other communities.

In 2008, the following stories were selected by the members of the Bureau to receive a grant of US\$5,000 each to develop a project that replicates the success story:

1. Where there's a FLAME, there's a fire – Namibia, (<http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/ifapstories/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F61.html;d=1>).
2. Open Source Software brings a new lease of life to libraries in Palestine – Palestinian Authority, (<http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/ifapstories/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F22.html;d=1>).
3. Team Teaching English with International English Speaking Volunteers at Watphrathatwittaya School, Thailand, (<http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/ifapstories/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F27.html;d=1>).
4. Our City, Our Voices: Immigrant Newscasts in the Digital Age – United States of America, (<http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/ifapstories/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F59.html;d=1>).
5. "It's DEAF WAY! – Deaf community in NE of Brazil creating the tool of their own for development" – Brazil, (<http://www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/ifapstories/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F37.html;d=1>).

Lack of funds prevented the continuation of this activity in 2009.

IFAP contribution to the international Information Society debate and implementation of WSIS Action Lines

IFAP Council members (Antonin Chlum, Czech Republic, Divina Frau-Meigs, France; Verena Metze-Mangold, Germany, Pauline Dugré, Canada), as well as Miriam Nisbet, the then Director, Information Society Division, CI Sector, represented IFAP during Multistakeholder Consultation Meetings for the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines (C1; C3; C8; C9; C10; C11) in Geneva, Switzerland, from 19 to 23 May 2008.

At the invitation of the Council of Europe, the Bureau of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)/UNESCO and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) agreed to hold a joint workshop during the Internet Governance Forum (Hyderabad, India, December 2008) on "Delivering universal access and public value of the Internet: a goal of national information policy".

Since the involvement of the UNESCO Secretariat in the preparation of this workshop or in funding travel costs for IFAP speakers could not be obtained, they accepted funding from the Council of

Europe. Unfortunately, in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, the Council of Europe decided at the last moment to withdraw from the IGF. Therefore, IFAP speakers could not attend the workshop.

IFAP, represented by Professor Divina Frau-Meigs of France, served as co-organizer and co-chair of a Working Session: “Citizenship for the Information Society: Media Education and Civic Participation” Second Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Istanbul, Turkey, 6-7 April 2009, together with the AoC in collaboration with other organizations.

2. IFAP AND UNESCO

As can be seen from the Analysis of the IFAP Statutes and Rules of Procedure to be discussed under a separate item of the agenda, the exact nature of the relationship between IFAP and UNESCO in general, and the UNESCO Secretariat in particular, leaves a lot of room for interpretation. A particularly interesting example of this was the draft Strategic Plan submitted to the Council at its last session in 2008. It was based on the concept that “Information for All” can be interpreted as a goal, to be pursued by UNESCO as a whole, and not necessarily as a programme, separate from the UNESCO Secretariat. Accordingly, it provided for the gradual phasing out of the Council and the Bureau. This was not accepted by the Council, but left the issue of IFAP-UNESCO relations open.

Theoretically, three models of these relations are possible:

1. IFAP defines the goals and sets strategy, as well as practical forms of action, for UNESCO as a whole in the “Information for All” field, without undertaking such activities of its own;
2. IFAP defines a programme of action for itself within the general UNESCO Programme and Budget to promote “Information for All” and – given sufficient money and capacity – implements that programme of action;
3. IFAP and UNESCO Secretariat cooperate in both areas – strategy and practical activities.

The first model is probably closest to the original vision of IFAP when it was being created. This may be the conclusion from IFAP Statutes, stating that the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme is “established within UNESCO” and should “plan and guide the implementation of the [Information for All] Programme” within the framework of the decisions of the General Conference concerning it. As much is clear from document IFAP-2002/COUNCIL.I/3 “Functioning of the Council”, presented by the Director-General to the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme during its First Session in November 2001. It states in part:

4. *The Council will be **consulted** on the content of the draft biennial programmes (C/5) and medium term strategies (C/4) of the Organization ...*

5. *The Council will be **briefed** on the ongoing Regular Programme and its evaluation, and will be **invited to advise** on its implementation including suggestions and offers of assistance concerning the implementation of specific activities.*

That vision has been supplanted by the results of the WSIS process which has defined the goals of the entire international community in the Information/Knowledge Society field. Nevertheless, as long as there was money in the IFAP Special Fund donated by Member States, IFAP could identify projects to be implemented by the UNESCO Secretariat.

Accordingly, IFAP has in practice been led to go in the direction of the second model, with the implication that it since it is an intergovernmental programme; it is up to Member States to provide extrabudgetary funds to finance its activities, and to provide/develop the capacity to implement them. This has proved to be difficult.

In the past biennium, the Bureau has sought to find ways of resolving that difficulty. All the issues involved in this were raised in a letter sent by the Bureau to the UNESCO Director-General in May 2009, dealing among other things with lack of consultations with IFAP of document 35 C/5, definition and status of IFAP, IFAP-Secretariat cooperation and funding.

Though IFAP was not formally consulted, the Bureau and Council also decided to make their contribution to the preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5). To this end, a questionnaire was sent out to Council members, to find out what changes they wanted to see in the draft, so as to achieve better reflection in the Programme and Budget of “Information for All” goals.

Through active preparation for successive meetings of the Executive Board and for the General Conference in 2009, IFAP Bureau and Council were instrumental to some degree in obtaining the decisions of both bodies that are favourable to IFAP and help resolve the structural difficulties referred to here.

The 180th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board (30 September – 17 October, 2008) endorsed the IFAP Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, highlighted the importance of the role of the Intergovernmental Council for IFAP in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and devoted considerable attention in its debate and 180 EX/Decision 15 to ways of strengthening IFAP. The relevant parts of this Decision are reproduced below:

11. Recalls 33 C/Resolution 57, adopted at the 33rd session of the General Conference, on Strengthening of the Special Fund for the Information for All Programme and urges again Member States to continue to contribute to the IFAP Special Fund;

12. Requests the Director General to take appropriate measures in accordance with document 34 C/5 to allocate sufficient funds in the current biennium from the regular budget to finance assistance to Member States, particularly for developing countries in the formulation of national information policy frameworks and strategies;

13. Requests the Director-General to identify extra budgetary funds to contribute to IFAP's Special Fund, to take appropriate measures in order to facilitate together with the IFAP Council members the fundraising process for the IFAP Special Fund, both from Member States and from private sector donors and provide adequate resources by, inter alia, strengthening administrative support;

14. Further requests the Director-General to take appropriate measures in order to ensure an adequate coordination with IFAP and its Council in planning and implementing UNESCO's Regular Programme related to IFAP;

15. (...)

16. Requests the Director-General to consider allocating in view of the priorities of UNESCO, additional funds and staff support to IFAP's activities in the budget proposal for the next biennium (35 C/5).

The language of this decision clearly suggests a preference for the third model of relations between UNESCO and IFAP, one of close coordination and collaboration, including the provision of funds and staff support to assist IFAP in its activities.

During its 181st session in April 2009, the Executive Board recognized “the important role of the Information for All Programme and the International Programme for the Development of Communication for the bridging of the digital divide and the preservation of cultural diversity, human rights and access to pluralistic, free and independent sources of information” and called “for their continual strengthening and support to fulfil their mandates in this field”.

Then, during the 35th session of the General Conference in October 2009, Poland initiated and submitted, together with many other countries (Algeria, Argentina, Colombia, France, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Draft Resolution 29 (co-sponsored by Bulgaria, Greece, Ukraine) which amended the Draft Programme and Budget for 2010-2011 (35 C/5). In Major Programme V: Resolution No.: Communication and information 05000, under Biennial sectoral priority 2: “Building capacities for universal access to information and knowledge, paragraph (xi) was revised to read: “contribute to promoting equitable and affordable access to information for all; assist Member States in the establishment and implementation of effective policy frameworks, strategies and capacity-building for fostering information literacy, information preservation, information ethics, information for development and information accessibility; **in particular through the Information for All Programme (IFAP)**; enhance the international and national outreach of the Information for All Programme (IFAP); enhance information accessibility for the disadvantaged, including indigenous people and minority groups; promote the availability of diverse and multilingual content.”

In main line of action 3, paragraph 7, the changed introduced by DR 29 was: “Member States assisted in the development, adoption **and implementation** of inclusive policy frameworks for universal access to, and dissemination of, information based on **the Strategic Plan for the Information for All Programme (IFAP), endorsed by the Executive Board at its 180th session.**”

These changes should pave the way to closer cooperation and synergies between the work of the Secretariat and of IFAP and to greater involvement of IFAP in the implementation of UNESCO’s Programme. It is a significant step in placing IFAP more squarely in the mainstream of UNESCO’s work, in line with model 3 identified above.

3. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF IFAP

As is clear from the Executive Board decisions cited above, responsibility for strengthening IFAP and for improving its effectiveness and efficiency rests equally with the Intergovernmental Council and other IFAP bodies and with the Director-General and the Secretariat, and crucially depends on:

- Considerably augmented funding, from the regular budget and from fundraising;
- Strengthened administrative support;
- Adequate coordination between the Secretariat and IFAP and its Council in planning and implementing UNESCO’s regular programme related to IFAP.

These actions are primarily in the hands of the Secretariat. In response to the 2008 Decision of the Executive Board, the Secretariat did indeed allocate an additional sum of money from the regular budget to IFAP and raised the level of staff support. However, IFAP bodies also have an indispensable role to play in this respect.

During the session of the Bureau in January 2010, the Secretariat reported that the balance of IFAP’s funds in November 2009 stood at \$84,162.20. That was mostly due to the fact that late in the year the Secretariat had been able to trace funds remaining unspent after the completion of IFAP-funded projects.

As noted in the Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, “The allocation for 2008-2009 of an administrative budget of \$240 000 (with practically no funds for activities) is woefully inadequate and jeopardizes both the achievement of IFAP’s goals, and especially the much-needed enhancement of its effectiveness and efficiency”. It is to be hoped that in line with 180 EX/Decision 15 of the Executive Board, the Director-General will allocate in view of the priorities of UNESCO, additional funds and staff support to IFAP’s activities in the budget for 2010-2011.

Since 2008 the only country to contribute to the IFAP Special Account has been China (an annual allocation of 20 000 dollars). In his letter to the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to UNESCO of March 2009, the Chair of the IFAP Council conveyed the gratitude of the Bureau and Council of the Information for All Programme of UNESCO for that country's significant contribution to the IFAP Special Fund.

Efforts to raise funds undertaken by the Bureau (a letter by the Chair to delegations of EU countries to UNESCO, requesting financial contributions to finance projects in developing countries, with a list of such possible projects enclosed) did not produce results.

The issue of IFAP funding remains to be resolved. During the General Conference in 2009, the representative of a donor country underlined the importance of voluntary extrabudgetary contributions to the IFAP Special Account and suggested that all elected members of the IFAP Intergovernmental Council should make a yearly financial contribution to the Account. Several other delegates supported this proposal. It was agreed that this proposal should be further considered and developed by the IFAP Council.

Other efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of IFAP have been undertaken in institutional and organizational areas. This goal is served by draft decisions and documents submitted to this session of the Council:

1. A draft decision conferring on the Bureau the role of the executive body of the Council, actively cooperating with the Secretariat in implementing the goals of UNESCO, and inviting the Chair and Bureau members to agree on a division of labour within the Bureau, resulting in the acceptance by Bureau members of responsibilities for, in particular, contacts and regular cooperation with Council members; development and operation of Working Groups; cooperation with National IFAP Committees; fundraising; IFAP projects and visibility; oversight of the IFAP website and the IFAP Information Society Observatory; outreach to, and contacts with, various stakeholder groups and organizations; operational relations with UNESCO Member States that are not elected members of the Council; a proposal that the Council develop recommendations for strengthening the participation of Council members in IFAP activities;
2. Adoption of a procedure for granting the IFAP label to select projects submitted by their organizers and recognised as best serving the goal of Information for All.
3. New guidelines for the establishment and operation of National IFAP Committees;
4. A draft decision on recognizing each year activities or projects of National IFAP Committees that best contribute to the promotion of Information for All in the five priority areas of IFAP: information for development, information literacy, information preservation, information ethics and information accessibility.

One area where progress is still urgently needed is communication with UNESCO Member States and other stakeholders. The Bureau occasionally publishes IFAP Agendas or IFAP Briefs with information about major developments. These are sent to all Council members and to National IFAP Committees. They have also been sent to Permanent Delegations of countries represented on the Council. The Chair has also occasionally written to the Permanent Delegations with other news about IFAP's activities. The online Information Society Observatory carries major substantive documents and reports. However, there is no direct channel of communication with other UNESCO Member States, e.g. via the National Commissions for UNESCO, except for very occasional news items on the CI website on major events or publications. Therefore, the great majority of UNESCO Member States are not informed about the work of IFAP. This barrier needs to be overcome, if IFAP is to become more firmly established and achieve more support in the UNESCO framework and engage in successful fundraising. This is why the proposed draft decision conferring on the Bureau the role of the executive body of the Council provides for particular members of the Bureau to be responsible for IFAP projects and visibility as well as outreach to, and contacts with, various

stakeholder groups and organizations; finally precisely operational relations with UNESCO Member States that are not elected members of the Council.

CONCLUSION

IFAP has been reinvigorated and has some major activities and achievements to its credit. This, however, is only the beginning of the road. IFAP is not out of the woods yet. The stage is set for closer cooperation with the Secretariat and for IFAP to provide a framework for many UNESCO activities in the area of “Information for All.” It is now up to IFAP to show it has the initiative, ability and capacity to make its contribution to UNESCO’s work and to shoulder its responsibilities.

In conclusion, let me thank members of the Bureau and of the Council for their cooperation in this difficult period of the Programme’s history, as well as Mr Abdul Waheed Khan, ADG/CI, Ms Miriam Nisbet, Director of the Information Society Division, and especially to Mr Boyan Radoykov, Programme Specialist in the Information Society Division, for their ongoing cooperation and assistance in the work of the IFAP Bureau.