

## THE PRAGUE DECLARATION

### ***"TOWARDS AN INFORMATION LITERATE SOCIETY"***

We the participants at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, organized by the US National Commission on Library and Information Science and the National Forum on Information Literacy, with the support of UNESCO, representing 23 countries from all of the seven major continents, held in Prague, the Czech Republic, September 20—23, 2003, propose the following basic Information Literacy principles:

- The creation of an Information Society is key to social, cultural and economic development of nations and communities, institutions and individuals in the 21st century and beyond.
- Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand; it is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning.
- Information Literacy, in conjunction with access to essential information and effective use of information and communication technologies, plays a leading role in reducing the inequities within and among countries and peoples, and in promoting tolerance and mutual understanding through information use in multicultural and multilingual contexts.
- Governments should develop strong interdisciplinary programs to promote Information Literacy nationwide as a necessary step in closing the digital divide through the creation of an information literate citizenry, an effective civil society and a competitive workforce.
- Information Literacy is a concern to all sectors of society and should be tailored by each to its specific needs and context.
- Information Literacy should be an integral part of Education for All, which can contribute critically to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the above context, we propose for the urgent consideration of governments, civil society and the international community the following policy recommendations:

- The September 2003 Prague Conference Report should be studied and its recommendations, strategic plans and research initiatives implemented expeditiously as appropriate (the report will be disseminated in December 2003).
- The progress in, and opportunities for implementation of the above should be assessed by an International Congress on Information Literacy, which could be organized in the first half of 2005.
- The possibility of inclusion of Information Literacy within the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003—2012) should be considered by the international community.