The 2nd International Conference Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace
(Yakutsk, July 12-14, 2011)

The 2nd International Conference Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace took place on 12-14 July, 2011, in Yakutsk, Russian Federation. It might be seen as one of the key events within the framework of the Russian chairmanship in the UNESCO Information for All Programme.

The event was organized by the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, the North-Eastern Federal University, the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, the MAAYA World Network for Linguistic Diversity, and Latin Union with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, UNESCO and the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO.

UNESCO has been continuously warning the world that more than half of the currently alive 7,000 languages may extinguish within several generations. Wise ethno-linguistic policies and modern information technologies offer a chance of at least slowing down these processes, which are capable of inflicting much harm to the entire humankind. Securing languages presence and development in cyberspace is an important prerequisite for their preservation. What can and should be done in order to overcome language marginalization? How can we help languages become better equipped, represented and used? And who is able and obliged to do this?

The Conference offered a unique opportunity for the delegates to share international best practice in the policies, standards and instruments for the preservation and development of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace. In particular the following topics were discussed:

- Digital Multilingualism for the Construction of Inclusive Societies
- Public Policies on Languages in Cyberspace
- Developing Legal and Institutional Instruments to Support Multilingualism
- Implementing existing normative instruments (UNESCO 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace)
- Using the Internet to Counter the Marginalisation of Languages
- Multilingualism as an Internet Governance Issue
- Cyberspace and Education in Mother Tongue
- Multilingualism and Information Literacy
- Tools and techniques to ensure the presence in cyberspace of languages that are currently underrepresented or absent

Holding this Conference is also significant for consolidating and further developing the UNESCO Information for All Programme which was established primarily for providing guidance to all of the UNESCO Member States involved in building an inclusive pluralistic information society, i.e. a society where the most essential information is generally accessible, where equal access is granted to quality education, and where freedom of expression, respect to cultural and linguistic diversity are ensured.

The Conference professional programme was structured so as to highlight three decisive factors for the development of languages in cyberspace, namely: instruments for language promotion in cyberspace; institutions that are actively involved in the promotion of these instruments; and creation of favorable environment. It is essential to adopt effective ethno-linguistic and ethno-cultural policies embracing a set of scientifically proven, efficient, consecutive and interactive

measures focused on the empowerment and active involvement of all stakeholder institutions. These institutions shall be legally charged with ensuring protection, free expression and development of linguistic, ethno-cultural and religious identity of ethnic communities; preservation and promotion of their moral values, traditions and all types of folklore; extension of the application of national languages; and actual confirmation of the principles of cultural pluralism, bi- and multilingualism, including their application in education.

The conference gathered about 100 experts from over 30 countries of all continents, including Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, France, Japan, India, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, UK, USA. International organizations were presented by Mr. Indrajit Banerjee, Director of the Knowledge Society Division, UNESCO Communication and Information Sector, and Mr. Alexander Ntoko, Head of the Corporate Strategy Division of the International Telecommunication Union.

Greetings to the Conference were received from Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General; Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union; Egor Borisov, President of the Republic of Sakha; Alexander Avdeev, Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation; Andrei Fursenko, Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation; Grigory Ordzhonikidze, Executive Secretary of the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO; Abulfas Karayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Azerbaijan Republic; Olöf Olafsdottir, Director of the Education and Languages Department of the Council of Europe.

For three days, heads and leading experts of intergovernmental and international organizations; governmental authorities; institutions of culture, education, science, information and communication; representatives of business entities; civil society; media discussed political, cultural, educational, ideological, philosophical, social, ethical, technological and other aspects of the activities aimed at supporting and preserving languages and cultures and promoting them in cyberspace.

At the opening session in the Government House of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the participants to the Conference were greeted by the Chairs of the Organizing Committee – Evgenia Mikhailova, Rector, North-Eastern Federal University (Yakutsk, Russian Federation); Evgeny Kuzmin, Chairman, Intergovernmental Council and Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme; President, Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Moscow, Russian Federation); Adama Samassekou, President, MAAYA World Network for Linguistic Diversity (Bamako, Mali), and Aisen Nikolayev, First Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

In his opening address, Evgeny Kuzmin, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council and Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, recalled the First International Conference Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace that took place in Yakutsk on July 2-4, 2008, and noted that:

The First Conference resulted in raising awareness of the issues of multilingualism preservation and promotion in cyberspace. It facilitated further development of professional contacts and new continuous friendly relations. The Lena Resolution, its final document, has received recognition and is being cited in research and formal documents of international organizations. The proceedings of the First Conference were issued in printed and digital formats in Russian and English. Following the Lena Resolution, the Multilingualism in Cyberspace Centre was established in Yakutsk in 2010, at the North-Eastern Federal University under the auspices of the

Russian Committee of the Information for All UNESCO Programme and Moscow UNESCO Bureau. At present, this Centre is among the major organizers of the Second Conference.

While the First Conference gathered representatives of 15 countries, the Second Conference is welcoming participants from over 30 countries and all continents.

While the First Conference was organized by the Russian team only, the Second Conference has been prepared with the active participation of the MAAYA and Latin Union. Thematic coverage of the Second Conference's professional programme was even broader than that of the First Conference.

At the Conference opening, survey papers were presented by:

- Adama SAMASSEKOU, President of the MAAYA World Network for Linguistic Diversity; President of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (Bamako, Mali)
  Legal and Institutional Instruments to Support Multilingualism Worldwide

- Daniel PRADO, Director of the Terminology and Language Engineering Department of the Latin Union (Paris, France)
  It Is Time to Put Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity at the Center of International Debate

- Evgenia MIKHAILOVA, Rector of the North-Eastern Federal University (Yakutsk, Russian Federation)
  Preserving Languages, Cultures, People and Environment Is Our Common Goal

- Evgeny KUZMIN, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council and Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme; President of the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Moscow, Russian Federation)
  Social Institutions Supporting Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace: Roles, Functions, Responsibilities

The joint project of the North-Eastern Federal University and Siberian Federal University Preserving Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): The Foresight Project was presented by Valery Yefimov, Research Supervisor, Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies and Research of the Siberian Federal University.

The three plenary meetings and eight meetings of the following three sections were held during the next two days on board of the "Mikhail Svetlov" cruise boat:

- Instruments for Language Preservation and Promotion in Cyberspace,
- Institutes to Promote Linguistic and Cultural Diversity,
- Creating Positive Environment for the Promotion of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity.

 A field session of the Section Preserving Cultural and Linguistic Diversity of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): The Foresight Project was held in the North-Eastern Federal University.

The Plenary and Section Meetings were moderated by:

- Adama SAMASSEKOU, President of the MAAYA World Network for Linguistic Diversity; President of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (Bamako, Mali)

- Tatyana MANILOVA, Deputy Director, Department of Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts; Head, Library and Archive Division, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; member, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (Moscow, Russian Federation)

- Indrajit BANERJEE, Director, Knowledge Society Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO (Paris, UNESCO)

- Daniel PIMIENTA, Director, Networks and Development Foundation FUNREDES (Saint Domingue, Dominican Republic)

- Vera NIKIFOROVA, Vice Rector, Arctic State Institute of Art and Culture (Yakutsk, Russian Federation)

- Nadezhda ZAIKOVA, Vice Rector, North-Eastern Federal University, member, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (Yakutsk, Russian Federation)

- Irina DOBRYNINA, Director, National Library of the Republic of Karelia (Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation)

- Evgeny KUZMIN, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council and Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme; President of the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Moscow, Russian Federation)

- Marcel DIKI-KIDIRI, Senior Researcher, Language, Languages and Black African Cultures Unit, French National Center for Scientific Research (Poitiers, France)

- Natalia GENDINA, Director, Research Institute for Information Technologies in Social Sphere, Kemerovo State University of Culture and Arts, member, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (Kemerovo, Russian Federation)

- Anastasia PARSHAKOVA, Deputy Director, Interregional Library Cooperation Centre; Project Coordinator, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme (Moscow, Russian Federation)

- Mikhail FEDOROV, Vice Rector, North-Eastern Federal University (Yakutsk, Russian Federation)

- Valery YEFIMOV, Director, Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, Siberian Federal University (Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation).

Sergei Bakeykin, Executive Director of the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, Vice Chair of the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme reported on the efforts of the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme and its working body, Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, to promote linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace.

Anastasia Parshakova, Deputy Director of the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre and Project Coordinator of the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, made a communication on elaborating practical guidelines for the stakeholders of the multilingualism development process and presented the publication Developing Multilingualism in Cyberspace: Guidelines for Libraries.

A total of 70 papers were presented at the Conference.

A session of the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Linguistic Diversity was held during the Conference under the chairmanship of Adama Samassekou, the Summit initiator.

The political and practical guide Net.Lang, Towards the Multilingual Cyberspace, prepared by the MAAYA Network with the support of UNESCO, Union Latine, ANLoc and IDRC was presented to the Conference participants. Articles to the guide were prepared by representatives of 15 countries, including Evgeny Kuzmin, Chairman of the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, and Natalia Gendina, Committee member and Director of the Research Institute for Information Technologies in Social Sphere, Kemerovo State University of Culture and Arts.

An exhibition of the publications by the Committee and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre was opened at the Conference.

The final document – Yakutsk Call for Action: a Roadmap towards the World Summit on Multilingualism (2017) – was unanimously adopted at the Conference closing session.

The Conference proceedings will be published in Russian and English.