**Presentation by Ms Chafica Haddad**

**Chair of the**

**Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)**

**On the occasion of the**

**ICT4IAL – ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning - Dissemination Conference**

**Riga, Latvia**

**27 – 28 May, 2015**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

* In my capacity as Chairperson of the intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), it is my pleasure, on behalf of the 26 Member States elected to the IFAP Council, as well as its various National IFAP Committees and expert Working Groups, to extend warm greetings to participants attending this important conference.
* The Information for All Programme was established in 2001. It provides a platform for international policy discussions, cooperation and the development of guidelines for action in the area of access to information and knowledge.
* IFAP supports Member States to develop and implement national information policy and strategy frameworks that support their efforts towards building inclusive knowledge societies. IFAP’s focus is on ensuring that all people have access to information they can use to enhance their lives.
* IFAP’s activities are closely integrated with and undertaken in cooperation with UNESCO's regular programme, particularly in the area of communication and information. IFAP works closely with other intergovernmental organizations and international NGOs, particularly those with expertise in the use of information and knowledge for human development.
* IFAP’s focuses on six priority areas: information accessibility, information for development, information ethics, information literacy, information preservation and multilingualism in cyberspace.
* These priorities are inter-disciplinary, inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing and I would like to provide insights into our actions:
* Through its **information for development priority**, IFAP is collecting case studies and supporting research into the role of information and information policies in supporting human development. IFAP has been exploring the promotion of freedom of information initiatives and public domain information.
* In the Caribbean IFAP undertook a 17-country study examining the use of open data, free and open source software (FOSS), open standards and other open solutions across government, civil society and the private sector. This work culminated in a number of regional and national workshops which produced implementation roadmaps for building the policy, sharing experiences and identifying champions.
* On the other side of the globe in the Pacific, IFAP has also been working with other island nations to strengthen links between information and development policy in particular by providing information on sustainable development and disaster mitigation.
* Since 2003 IFAP has organized annual training events in China, through the project “Empowering rural livelihoods”to support local economic and social development to rural communities.Over 800 people: doctors, teachers, farmers, government officials - have directly benefited from these training activities.
* Under its **information literacy priority,** IFAP is supporting capacity-building, the development of tools, and promoting the incorporation of information literacy into education curricula and national information policies.
* In order to develop strategies for bringing information literacy into teaching and learning processes, IFAP conducted “Information literacy training-the-trainers workshops”. The project succeeded in training 761 trainers of trainers from over 100 countries. In turn, these trainers are now spreading this knowledge locally supporting change at many levels and empowering vulnerable groups.
* Through its **information preservation priority area** IFAP collaborates with the Memory of the World Programme to develop and implement digital preservation standards and techniques as well as to support the exchange of best practices across professional communities and amongst policy-makers.
* In 2013 IFAP initiated the “Digitization of Grenada’s National Archives” project to recover, treat and protect, valuable historical documentary resources, endangered by weather conditions and lack of preservation actions. Over 132 volumes of records and local government correspondence were saved. These documents are providing crucial insights for scholars into the major political, social and economic factors that have affected the transformation of the southern Caribbean.
* Other international IFAP initiatives are addressing archival standards and software tools, the training of information professionals, North-South and South-South cooperation.
* In line with **its information ethics priority area**, IFAP is assisting policy-makers in identifying emerging trends, training researchers, conducting research studies, as well as promoting international debate and reflection on the ethical, legal and societal aspects of the use and applications of ICT. IFAP’s goal is to support understanding and awareness amongst stakeholder and individuals, of the impact of the social use of emerging technologies and their implications for societal transformation.
* In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a youth-focused capacity-building initiative, known as the Safe and Secure Youth.Net (SafeNet), was launched to address the needs of at-risk youth. Through this project, youth technology camps were organized in 12 cities, towns and villages demonstrating to over 500 young men and women how to practically address online ethical issues including protecting privacy and preventing bullying. The project focused on a training-the-trainer approach, enabling these youth to pass on knowledge to their peers.
* Through its work with various international partners, IFAP is promoting international exchanges, research, development of tools and resources that contribute to realizing **multilingualism in cyberspace,** capacity-building and raising awareness of policy-makers and key stakeholders to create and record their own content.
* IFAP has organized 2 major international conferences on multilingualism and cyberspace in the city of Yakutsk in Russian Federation in 2008 and 2011. These conferences resulted in the adoption of two landmark documents: The Lena Resolution, which provided concrete recommendations for advancing linguistic diversity in cyberspace, and an action plan – The Yakutsk Call for Action: a Roadmap towards the World Summit on Multilingualism (2017).
* Finally, I would like to focus on the **Information accessibility** priority. Through this priority area IFAP addresses a range of issues linked to ensuring the availability, accessibility and affordability of information, as well as the specific needs of people with disabilities so as to facilitate their full participation in the knowledge societies.
* As part of its Information Accessibility mandate, IFAP is contributing to the development and empowerment of disadvantaged groups. People with disabilities often face difficulties accessing information. It is important to inform people with disabilities of the role that information and knowledge plays in their social inclusion and to develop their capacities to access and use ICT as well as to build awareness of these concerns amongst civil society and local governments. These efforts contribute to creating the necessary enabling environment for the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.
* IFAP contributed to UNESCO’s international conference “***From Exclusion to Empowerment: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies for Persons with Disabilities***”, held in New Delhi, India in November 2014. In addition to panel discussion and keynote speeches, the event also included an exhibition on ICTs for inclusion of persons with disabilities and a film festival. This landmark event gathered some 700 experts from 80 countries all over the world. [...read more](javascript:void(0);)
* The outcomes of this highly event were captured in “The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality”. The multi-stakeholder and high level drafting group included prominent personalities such as Mr Lenin Moreno, Special Envoy of the United Nations for Disability and Accessibility Issues. This Document is currently being discussed in Geneva at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2015 High-Level panel organized under the theme “***Making Empowerment a Reality – Accessibility for All***”.
* An important policy resource developed by IFAP in concert with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) for people with disabilities is the ***IFLA Manifesto for libraries serving persons with a print disability***. This document was endorsed in November 2013 at UNESCO’s 37th General Conference. The Manifesto for Libraries Serving Persons with a Print Disability encourages libraries to provide more accessible library and information services for blind and visually impaired patrons. According to IFLA, the lack of access to information is the biggest barrier for persons with a print disability to fully and effectively participate in all aspects of society.

**Avenues for cooperation between IFAP and ICT4IAL**

I would like to identify two areas, namely the IFAP National Information Society Policy Template and the Inclusive Learning Laboratory (I2Lab) where IFAP and ICT4IAL can create synergies.

* **IFAP’s National Information Society Policy Template**, provides case studies, strategic and methodological guidance to Member States in developing, renewing, and implementing national strategies and information policy frameworks.
* In the framework of the recommendations of the Qingdao Declaration adopted by the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education under the theme “Seize digital opportunities, lead education transformation” held in Qingdao, China, from 23 to 25 May 2015, we will continue to promote the use of ICT “to deliver education and training in both formal and non-formal settings anytime and anywhere. As it can improve and diversify learning pathways, improve quality and further reach vulnerable and underserved groups including rural youth and adults, women and girls, out-of-school youth and people with disabilities”.
* Key to the application of the IFAP template is the availability of modules and policy resources relevant to stakeholder’s needs. We would like to draw on the IFAP template to support the adoption of the Accessibility Guidance tool by UNESCO’s Member States
* **IFAP’s Inclusive Learning Lab (I2Lab)** concept was conceived with inclusive education experts, practitioners and persons with disabilities from developed and developing countries. The concept has been examined in a special forum organized during UNESCO’s international conference in New Delhi and continues to be refined.
* The I2Lab seeks to create a new type of learning environment which is dynamic, inclusive, scalable and accessible to all learners. The I2Lab is not a standalone initiative but is designed to be integrated into existing formal and non-formal contexts such as libraries, community centers or other public spaces.
* The I2Lab is organized around four, overlapping and interlinked concepts that address: development, digital accessibility, dialogue and creative expression, and diversity. In 2016 we would like to roll-out I2Labs and welcome an opportunity to explore how with ICT4IAL we can make this possible.
* Once again, I would like to say how much we appreciate this opportunity. There is much we can do together in Europe and around the world. We see collaboration with ICT4IAL as a strategic partnership which can open up tremendous global opportunities and bring value to our stakeholders.
* Thank you for your attention.