

Report on the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2014, France (12-22 August, 2014).

1. I was nominated to attend the 30th International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Pre-Conference of Library and Research Services for Parliaments held from 12-14 August, 2014 in Paris and the 80th IFLA General Conference and Assembly from 16-22 August 2014 in Lyon, France. Pre-Conference of Library and Research Services for Parliaments, as the caption suggests, is open only to the professionals working in the Parliament Library of the member countries. Besides me, two officers from the LARRDIS of the Lok Sabha Secretariat also attended the Conference.

1.2. The IFLA is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit, organisation with over 1400 members in nearly 150 countries. India is one of its members. It aims to promote high standards of provision and delivery of library and information services. The Headquarters of IFLA is located in Hague, the Netherlands. The IFLA World Library and Information Congress is held every year.

2. (I) The 30th IFLA Pre-Conference of Library and Research Services for Parliaments, Paris (12-14 August, 2014)

2.1 The theme for the 30th IFLA Pre Conference of Library and Research Services for Parliaments was "*The Parliamentary Library: past and future*". The venue for the three day Pre-Conference was in the buildings of the French National Assembly. The first day programme included Welcome and registration of the participants. A Guided tour of the *Palais Bourbon* which was followed by presentation of rare books in the Library of the French National Assembly was also organised. The participants assembled in the evening at the Palais Bourbon Building entrance for a group photograph. Later in the evening, there was a welcome reception and a toast by Michel Moreau, General Director of the Legislative Departments, representative of Corinne Luquiens, Secretary General of the French National Assembly.

2.2 The second day (13.8.2014) began with Opening session by Michel Moreau, General Director of the Legislative Departments, representative of Corinne Luquiens, Secretary General of the French National Assembly. This was followed by Introduction to the Conference by Raissa Teodori, Chair of the IFLA section on Library and Research Services for Parliament. The presentations on the French Legislative Procedure, the Monitoring and

Assessment of the Government's activity, Studies and Research in the Standing Committees made by the speakers enlightened us about the French Constitution and its political system, their Parliament research services and library network. Each presentation was followed by a brief interactive question and answer session. In the evening, the participants visited the Senate Library located in the *Palais du Luxembourg* where we were shown rare books.

2.3 On the third and final day (14.8.2014) the presentations touched wide ranging subjects, like, 'Serving MPs in evolving institutional and organisational contexts'; 'Collaborating with external partners to improve information and research products'; 'Guidelines for the development of Parliamentary Research services'. The post lunch session focused on the topic, 'Service evaluation, strategic planning and synergies to face new challenges'. Another interesting session of the day was titled "**PARL Talks**", an open session for pre-conference participants to share information and ideas related to parliamentary libraries and research services. Presentations in these Sessions were followed by open group discussions. I took part in informal discussion with other participants including representatives from (i) the Law Library, Congressional Research Service; (ii) Information Specialist, House of Parliaments, in the IPU; and (iii) Assistant Director, Knowledge Services Group, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. We shared information about the set up in our respective organisations and our role in providing information to the users.

2.4 The Pre- Conference was formally closed with an overall review and an outlook for the Main Conference by the Chair. It was also emphasised that the broader the base of transparency and open government policies, the more will be the citizens informed which would also lead to the participation of the citizens in the law making process. Therefore the role of the libraries in this regard was all the more important in reducing the technical gaps and the availability of access to information.

3. (II) **The 80th IFLA World Library and Information Congress, Lyon, (16-22 August 2014)**

3.1 The theme of the 80th IFLA Conference was "*Libraries, Citizens, Societies: Confluence for Knowledge*". The venue for the Conference was the Lyon Convention Centre. A total of 3,119 participants from various countries attended the Conference. During the entire period of the Conference, there were over 225 Sessions. There were around 25- 30 sessions being held simultaneously in a day. Participants had the option to attend the sessions of their interest. The sessions which were enriching and interested me included, (i) Officer's Training Session, (ii) Government Information and official

Publications, (iii) Library and Research Services for parliaments, (iv) Newcomers Session, (v) IFLA Market : Professional Activities, (vi) Plenary Session, (vii) IFLA President's Session, (viii) Google is not enough : Reference and Information Services for the transfer of knowledge – reframing the discussion – Reference and Information Services Section, (ix) Libraries for Democracy, and (x) Libraries, Governments and Cultural Heritage – Government Information and Official Publications with Government Libraries .

3.2 An Exhibition was also organised from 18-20 August, 2014 which highlighted the modern methods and techniques available in the sphere of publishing, printing, maintenance and preservation of documents. Another important event during the Conference was the '**Posters Session**' (from 18-20 August) in which participants conveyed their message on relevant and thought provoking themes through wall Presentations. The themes included 'Cross-border Confluence of Knowledge: The library- initiative Biblio 3 in Germany, France and Switzerland' (Germany); 'Librarians and millennial: Redefining the role of librarians in the learning commons' (United States); 'Get in touch with documents!' (France); 'Digital Library: connecting citizens to Parliament' (Brazil); etc.

3.3 The IFLA had also arranged for different 'Guided Tours' on different days for the benefit of the attendees on payment basis. I opted for the walking tour from 'Fourviere to old Lyon' on 19th August, 2014. It was an interesting and learning experience with our guide from the Lyon Tourism. A cultural evening was also arranged at La Sucriere for the participants on 19 August, 2014.

3.4 The Conference formally concluded on 21 August, 2014. It was concluded that the IFLA would continue with its mission to ensure right to information access to all. It was stressed that for this purpose, true professional development was the requirement on a continuous basis. In today's information age challenges are faced by libraries to cater to its users and simultaneously honouring the two core concepts of 'strong libraries' and 'strong societies'. Libraries build strong societies and informed citizens. Real democracy is achievable only when the people are informed citizens. After the presentation of the IFLA Awards, it was formally announced that the next IFLA WLIC 2015 would be held in Cape Town, South Africa.

4. The following set of the documents were collected by me during the conference:-

- (i) The French National Assembly, (ii) The Treasure of the Library;
- (iii) Luxembourg Palace; (iv) The Senate Library Reading Room
- (v) The East gallery of the Luxembourg Palace: Senate Library

- Annex; (vi) The Library of the National Assembly;
- (vii) Eugene Delacroix in the Senate Library;
- (viii) A copy of the IFLA Journal (Vol. 40, March 2014);
Two leaflets on IFLA and a copy of the 'Lyon Declaration on
Access to Information and Development';
- (ix) Papers on European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS);
- (x) A copy of the 'Final Announcement of IFLA WLIC 2015',
Cape Town; and
- (xi) A CD on the 'Interactive Virtual Tour of the Parliament of the
Republic of South Africa'

4.1 I would request to place these documents before the Secretary-General for information. If agreed, the documents may thereafter be kept in the records of the Library of the Secretariat.

5. As certain methods of information management are adopted by the library and research services of Parliaments where the two services work in tandem with each other in a compact and cohesive manner, such an approach is always beneficial for both of them. Stress can be laid on the optimum utilisation of information already available on the websites of various organisations of repute and the updating of latest information and other relevant inputs for inclusion in the same for the purpose of information sharing. One such section is the IFLA Government Information and Official Publications Section. This section has the mission of promoting free and equitable access to quality information to assure accountability from governments and other public bodies to the people they serve. Regular training of officials to keep their skills updated was stressed upon in the conference is equally relevant.

6. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for my nomination to the IFLA WLIC 2014; the officers and staff of the Training Unit and Conference and Protocol Section who have been most courteous and helpful to me. The IFLA Conference gave me an opportunity as well as an exposure for interacting with Library professionals from other Parliaments. I also acknowledge my gratitude for the courtesy and guidance that the Protocol Officer, Embassy of India in Paris (France) extended to me and other fellow delegates from India to the IFLA Conference.

7. A copy of the 'Certificate of Attendance' received by me at the end of the Conference is placed below.

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12.9.2014

