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# The Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy

The changing media landscape and the rapid growth in information are affecting individuals and societies now more than ever. In order to succeed in this environment, and to resolve problems effectively in every facet of life, individuals, communities and nations should obtain a critical set of competencies to be able to seek, critically evaluate and create new information and knowledge in different forms using existing tools, and share these through various channels. This literacy creates new opportunities to improve quality of life. However, individuals, organizations, and societies have to address existing and emerging barriers and challenges to the free and effective use of information, including, but not exhausted by, the following:

- Limited capacities, resources and infrastructure;
- Censorship, limited information in the public domain, commercialization, privatization, and monopolization of information;
- Lack of respect for cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Excessive and inappropriate legal barriers to accessing, distributing and owning information;
- Lack of awareness of long-term preservation of information, particularly personal digital information; and
- Lack of cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration among stakeholders (between librarians and media educators, between mass media outfits and academic organisations, etc.).

With this context, the International Conference *Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies* that was held in Moscow on 24-28 June 2012 aimed at raising public awareness of the significance, scale and topicality of the tasks of media and information literacy advocacy among information, media and educational professionals, government executives, and the public at large; at identifying key challenges and outlining policies and professional strategies in this field; and at contributing to improving

international, regional and national response to Media and Information Literacy (MIL) issues.

The Conference was organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, UNESCO Information for All Programme and UNESCO Secretariat, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, within the framework of Russia's chairmanship in the Intergovernmental UNESCO Information for All Programme.

The Conference gathered nearly 130 participants from 40 countries representing all continents: executives and experts of key specialized international governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations; leading world experts in the field of knowledge societies building; leading researchers and professors of journalism, librarianship and education; executives and representatives of government authorities responsible for educational institutions, libraries, and print and electronic media; representatives of international and national associations of media and information literacy professionals; representatives of organizations and institutions engaged in publishing professional literature on media and information literacy; and media practitioners.

The Conference participants agreed on the following:

1. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of open, plural, inclusive and participatory knowledge societies, and the civic institutions, organizations, communities and individuals which comprise these societies.

2. MIL is defined as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices required to access, analyse, evaluate, use, produce, and communicate information and knowledge in creative, legal and ethical ways that respect human rights. Media and information literate individuals can use diverse media, information sources and channels in their private, professional and public lives. They know when and what information they need and what for, and where and how to obtain it. They understand who has created that information and why, as well as the roles, responsibilities and functions of media, information providers and memory institutions. They can analyze information, messages, beliefs and values conveyed through the media and any kind of content producers, and can validate information they have found and produced against a range of generic, personal and context-based criteria. MIL competencies thus extend beyond information and communication technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretive skills

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across and beyond professional, educational and societal boundaries. MIL addresses all types of media (oral, print, analogue and digital) and all forms and formats of resources.

3. The MIL concept builds on prior international documents such as the Prague Declaration "Towards an Information Literate Society" (2003); Alexandria Proclamation "Beacons of the Information Society" (2005); Fez Declaration on Media & Information Literacy (2011); and the IFLA Media & Information Literacy recommendations (2011). MIL underpins essential competencies needed to work effectively towards achievement of the UN Millennium Development goals, the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and the goals promoted by the World Summit on the Information Society.

4. In order to achieve these goals, individuals, communities, businesses, organizations and nations continually need information about themselves and their physical and social environments, and an understanding of the many different media through which such information is found, understood and communicated. Yet the media are in a constant state of change. New technological developments continue to alter the parameters of work, leisure, family life and citizenship. All around the world, people are living in an environment increasingly defined by the convergence of different media, interactivity, networking and globalization. Particularly (but not only) for younger people, the importance of media and peer networks has increased, and a greater part of growing up takes place outside the traditional learning environments. The creation of media today no longer lies in the hands of a limited group of professionals; now everyone can generate it.

5. At the same time, digital divides remain significant. Many people in developing countries have no access to information and media at all. Even in the developed world, limitations are placed on physical access to technologies and many people at all levels lack the critical and higher-order thinking skills needed to make informed decisions and solve problems in every aspect of life (e.g., personal, social, educational, professional aspects at local, national, regional and international levels).

**Considering all the above, the participants of the International Conference *Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies* address heads of state; the UN system (particularly UNESCO), IGOs, NGOs ; education and research institutions and professional associations; media institutions; cultural and social institutions; networks; and the business and industry sector with the following proposals:**
   a. Recognize that MIL is essential to the well-being and progress of the individual, the community, the economy and civil society;
   b. Integrate MIL promotion in all national educational, cultural, information, media and other policies;

c. Outline responsibilities, develop capacity and promote collaboration between and among the different stakeholders (government, educational, media and youth organizations, libraries, archives, museums, and NGOs, among others).

d. Encourage education systems to initiate structural and pedagogical reforms necessary for enhancement of MIL;

e. Integrate MIL in the curricula including systems of assessment at all levels of education, *inter alia*, lifelong and workplace learning and teacher training;

f. Prioritize support to networks and organizations working on MIL issues, and invest in capacity building;

g. Conduct research on and develop tools for MIL, including frameworks for understanding, evidence-based practices, indicators and assessment techniques;

h. Develop and implement MIL standards;

i. Promote MIL related competencies which support reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing;

j. Encourage an intercultural dialogue and international cooperation while promoting MIL worldwide;

k. Invest in processes which support long-term preservation of digital information;

l. Promote and protect the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of information, right to privacy and confidentiality, ethical principles and other rights.

This document was produced through a collaborative process involving participants from the following 40 countries: Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Croatia, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Sudan, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Zambia.