

The New York Pledge

United Nations Libraries mobilize to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Libraries are unique, organic knowledge networks integral to the UN System and naturally connected with Member States, the wider academic community and society. For over 70 years, UN Libraries have been collecting, managing, preserving and disseminating UN knowledge to global audiences, while offering open, physical spaces for public dialogue and debate on all topics related to UN deliberations and actions.

These knowledge assets need to be mobilized in the service of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These assets need to be built into business processes and shared among Libraries and with Member State knowledge networks, through extensive partnerships. UN Libraries will act as a network of networks dedicated to UN knowledge sharing to facilitate and support the implementation of the SDGs and other global policy frameworks by leveraging the knowledge the network holds.

Digitization and preservation of UN analogue and digital content are of constant concern to UN Libraries, as is the provision of permanent access to information for Member States and citizens from all over the world. In particular, UN Libraries consider it their responsibility to support open, innovative and sustainable scholarly communication where publications, data and other research output is made available as open as possible; to monitor, and, where necessary, absorb and capitalize on the impact of AI on information management, to address the need for pragmatic curation of digital content, through the sharing of best practices.

Therefore, recognizing that:

- SDG 16 recognizes access to information as a universal human right and an essential tool to achieve sustainable development and informed citizenry; access to information is the foundation of an enabling environment for all SDGs;
- communities that have access to relevant, verified and timely information are better placed to work to eradicate poverty and inequality, improve agriculture, provide quality education, and promote health, culture, research and innovation;
- communities need physical spaces which support life-long learning and knowledge-sharing, particularly where literacy levels are low or access to information online is limited;
- 55 percent of the world's population use the Internet (ITU, 2018, UN Population Division, 2018)

- more than 80 per cent of the world's youth, from 104 countries, are online (ITU, 2018)
- 'No-one left behind' is the ethical imperative of Agenda 2030;

And acknowledging that:

- libraries empower people through enhancing their information literacy skills and supporting their pursuit of knowledge and; they are a pre-requisite for equal access to credible information, facts and knowledge, thereby creating opportunity for full engagement in civic life;
- there is a position by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, which engages and mobilizes libraries to work in support of the SDGs;

As a result, at the UN LINKS Meeting, held in October 2018 in New York, the UN Libraries agree:

- To work towards a UN Libraries inter-agency collaboration and a set of joint actions in digital information management in tune with and in support of facilitating the implementation and monitoring of the A2030, respectful of diverse Agency priorities;
- To work towards the development of a knowledge network of networks made of UN Libraries as a global community of practice connected with Member State knowledge networks with the aim to accelerate capacity building and engagement of libraries with relevant national A2030 frameworks and programmes as well as support the UN's own work around the SDGs;
- To engage for a sustainable scholarly communication cycle to pragmatically address the need for a coherent digital life-cycle management workflow for UN content, incl. long-term preservation and permanent, open access to information resources, research uptake by policy (and vice-versa);
- To continue the digitization and preservation of the United Nations print historical record and related accumulated knowledge to make it available to the broadest audience possible: not only collect but also develop each United Nations and subsidiary bodies' historical record through extensive collaborations.

The New York Pledge adopted by:

- The Steering Committee of the United Nations Secretariat Libraries
- Addis Ababa: Knowledge and Library Services, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- Beirut: Library of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
- Bangkok: Library of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP)

- Geneva: Library and Archives of the UN Office in Geneva (UNOG)
- Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme Library (UNEP)
- New York: The United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL, UNHQ)
- Santiago: Library of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Vienna: The Library of the UN office in Vienna (UNOV)

The New York Pledge endorsed by:

- Rome: Library and Research Centre, World Food Programme (WFP),
- Rome: David Lubin Memorial Library & Archives, Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Manila: Information Resources & Services, Asian Development Bank