Nafissatou Bakhoun
Librarian at Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire – Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal.

The theme of the Conference: ‘Libraries for life: democracy, diversity and delivery’ is a relevant one, because it emphasizes the strategic contribution of libraries in society. It is a very up-to-date theme, specially within the African context where libraries are vital for the struggle against illiteracy and the promotion of social development.

My whole impression of the Conference is a good one.

I am wondering whether attending IFLA Conference would be such an exciting experience without the exhibition and library visits. The exhibition gives the opportunity to discover concretely many organizations dealing with librarianship, to collect a great amount of information, and eventually to build partnership with some of them in which we take interest. I also found library visits very important, for they permit exchange of experience and the discovery of library systems and architecture completely different from ours.

It has been a fruitful experience for me and I will do my best to make my association profit from it.

Charles Batambuze
Librarian, Uganda Public Libraries Board, Kampala, Uganda; Secretary General, Uganda Library Association; Member of IFLA/FAIFE Committee.

As a first-timer, I was thoroughly overwhelmed by what I saw, heard and took part in. It was a conference that brought to my attention a world experience, understanding and appreciation of my profession. I am right now proud to belong to the LIS profession. It was also my first time to be in the company of a very large number of librarians from the world over, that for once I thought the world’s libraries were closed for one week! The experience of sharing business contacts with colleagues from different places was interesting. I still talk to some of them via email.

My first difficulty at the conference was the so many interesting parallel sessions. I was spoilt for choice most of the time, as I would have desired to be everywhere. All the same I was happy to interface with the greatest – people whom I have for a long time been associating with books because I read their books or about them. I thought some of the papers were very educative – the kind that broke new ground or experiences. The only problem was that for some of the sessions such as the Africa Section Business Meetings, the meeting room was too small. Up to now I can still see the disappointment on our faces as we tried to strain to hear what was being said, because we could not all fit in the room. In some of the meeting rooms we missed the services of the interpreters whereas the conference was multilingual.

I am however grateful that for the first time I was able to meet face to face with people whom I had been dealing for a long time. I am a member of IFLA/FAIFE [Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression] and was glad to renew my acquaintances with people I had met before and glad to meet new ones. I was refreshed by all the open sessions that FAIFE organized. I believe I am now a better campaigner for Freedom of Expression because I have a better understanding and grasp of the global situation.
I think that the exhibition was great. I was able to visit most of the stands. I got a lot of resources from CILIP [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals] and ALA [American Library Association] stands that should help our work of advocacy in Uganda. I also got some useful contacts - people willing to answer my questions. The children's model library was particularly great. I visited it to gain some ideas on how I could improve the children's activities in Uganda. Our Children's Reading Tents have now incorporated some of the new ideas learnt.

Attending my first IFLA Conference changed my perspective from a narrow view to a world perspective. I am thankful to DANIDA for sponsoring young professionals to attend the conference. I am however sad that DANIDA has opted out. CILIP and ALP could together find a way of identifying new partners who would grant more young people a chance to attend the conference wherever possible.

Chin Loy Jyoon
Librarian, National Library of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Treasurer, Librarians Association of Malaysia.

The exhibition gave me an insight on the latest library products and services available in the market. I was fascinated by the new products exhibited at the exhibition and I managed to collect some brochures and sample products to show to my colleagues in Malaysia. However I feel that there should also be printed books/magazines at the exhibition as not all countries especially the developing countries can subscribe to online databases or have Internet access.

It would be interesting for ALP/CILIP to set up an alumni for past DANIDA Travel Grant/CILIP Bursary Grant recipients so that we could continue to have networking among the recipients and share our experiences on librarianship in our respective countries.

The DANIDA Travel Grant has given me an opportunity to meet librarians and professionals in related fields from all over the world. I have improved my networking by exchanging and sharing ideas on global issues relating to library information.

Mac-Anthony Cobblah
Assistant Librarian, the Institute for Scientific and Technological Information, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Accra, Ghana; Coordinator of IFLA/DANIDA sponsored ILL/DD project in Ghana.

The programme content was very useful and beneficial to my professional development. I gained a lot of from the conference.

One of the programmes that I enjoyed most was the exhibitions, it gave me the opportunity to see at first hand some of the products that support modern information management. I interacted with a number of exhibitors and established good contacts with them.

I am very confident in saying that I can never be the same again in terms of my professional development. My participation in the conference and subsequent inservice training at the Edinburgh University Library and library visits in London has really provided me with new knowledge and skills and of course exposed me internationally. I can now contribute a great deal to the development of my institute and librarianship in general in Ghana. I will make sure I share my rich experiences with colleagues.

IFLA conference which is the largest gathering of information pro-
fessionals in the world is really an opportunity to make friends and established long lasting useful contacts. I make sure I exploited this opportunity to the maximum. I now have friends across all the continents.

Participation in IFLA conference or programmes should not be a one time activity, it has to be a continuous activity to enable one get the full benefits of the programmes.

ALP should as a matter of urgency look for funding to continue sponsoring young librarians from developing countries to participate in future IFLA conferences and programmes.

Sponsored participants should be supported financially by ALP/IFLA to organize training programmes/seminars that would enable them share their experiences with their colleagues back home.

Li Jingxia
Senior Librarian and Assistant Director, Wuhan Library, Wuhan, China.

I never went out of my country before, had no chance to communicate with the colleagues of the other countries and have no access to compare the difference between the China and other countries' libraries with my own eyes. ... It was great to see so many librarians from all over the world and to see what kind of projects there are around. Very energizing! It left a memorable impression on me and gave me great help in my job career. I shall never forget it.

I will try my best to strengthen the communication among China's public libraries and other country's libraries. I like to do something to build our librarian's home - IFLA, the sweet home of worldwide librarians.

After I came to my country, I have given several reports to introduce the IFLA in my city and have written a paper on my city's newspaper. More and more people get to know about IFLA. Hubei provincial library which is another public library in my city will join IFLA this year. Next month, the China Society for Library Science will hold the young scholar forum and invite me to give a speech to introduce IFLA. I will tell my experience and encourage more and more China's young librarians to attend IFLA's conference, pay attention to it and support it. Now I am setting to translate the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines into Chinese with other two persons. We want more and more China's librarians to know more about the developments in the world.

During the conference, I got many new ideas from the colleagues and make many friends from various countries. So when I meet some difficulties, I can exchange the ideas, discuss some problems and consult with other countries' librarians. Also I can know more about the developments in the world.

I hope that more and more librarians from the developing countries can get more and more opportunities to attend the conference and get opportunity to study in the developed libraries. It will give a great help to them and promote the library's development in the developing countries.

Sylvia Ogola
Senior Assistant Librarian, Maseno University, Kenya.

The conference was well organized, the registration process was very effectively handled and so were the other information points. From the information provided, it was very easy to get around and find one's way to the right place. I was very impressed with the fact that I could communicate with my family every day using the email facilities provided. As a first timer, I found the introduction for newcomers to be very important because everything was so overwhelming.

The receptions were all very interesting and instead of making one tired after a long day, they helped me to unwind and get ready for the following day. I enjoyed the entertainment provided during the conference but I really had fun at the Scottish dance - I had to leave because my legs gave way but I would have stayed on till the end.

I had the opportunity of meeting and interacting with professionals from all over the world and learning from them how they operate. I made several contacts that I intend to make use of especially related to library automation and the openings available in PhD programmes. I was very pleased to interact with those who had attended IFLA before and they gave me guidance in getting the most of the conference.

I now have the chance to inform my colleagues what they miss out on by not attending the conference. Many do not have an idea what IFLA is all about, and I'm glad I can give them my experience of the event.

I have now learnt that it is possible to attend IFLA or other seminars and conferences if only one is in touch with what is advertised on the Internet. I had never heard of IFLANET before this and I can now widen my horizons from the various contacts I made.

It is good to experience events outside one's environment to know what one is ignorant of. I learnt a lot from the sessions especially those relating to academic libraries - performance measurement, management and marketing.

I was impressed with the library visit because it gave me a chance to see what other libraries are doing that we can also copy.

I am glad I got the chance to experience IFLA.

As a first timer, I was overwhelmed with the whole experience. There
was so much to see and do and so little time to do it. If possible, there should be a help desk to guide first timers so that they make the most of the conference. If it were possible, each first timer would have a guide or mentor to whom they can turn to for any help.

It would be good to know that we can still keep in touch with CILIP and ALP. We should be kept informed of what is going on that can be of interest to us. We in turn should keep in touch by informing CILIP and ALP on any new events in our areas that might be of interest to others.