

**Welcome Greetings by Ms Chafica Haddad, Chair of the
Intergovernmental Council of the UNESCO
Information for All Programme**

Universal access to information and knowledge is fundamental to the development of inclusive Knowledge Societies. In the past, information and knowledge have too often been managed by a limited influential number of social, academic or economic groups and stakeholders. However, we believe everyone should have access to information and obtain competencies required to turn knowledge into practical value to their lives. With language being the foremost way communities engage in building knowledge societies, it is therefore vital that multilingualism is actively promoted in cyberspace.



As a Chair of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), and on behalf of the 26 IFAP Council members, I would like to encourage all stakeholders, and namely the participants in the Global expert meeting in Khanty-Mansiysk, to increase efforts for raising awareness about the importance of exploitation of technological and scientific progress for linguistic diversity and multilingualism, and most importantly to identify practical ways of making outcomes and impact of the progress tangible and visible at community, national, regional and global levels. The cross-cutting nature of evolving Knowledge Societies allows our goal of a multilingual cyberspace to be pursued through a wide variety of activities, including gathering working groups of experts, assisting national governments, developing national policy frameworks, advocating open approaches to ICT and information development, and promoting accessibility, preservation and literate use of information and technological resources through a multi-stakeholder networks, community members and in general language users.

Furthermore, international exchanges like this facilitate the development of joint approaches tools and resources, and mobilization of resources for capacity building by raising awareness among policy-makers, academia, language users and other key stakeholders. I am convinced that the Global Expert Meeting on Multilingualism in Cyberspace, taking place in Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug – Ugra, Russian Federation, between 4 and 9 July 2015, will expand positively on our work fostering diverse, equitable, open and inclusive knowledge societies.

Finally, I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug-Ugra (Russian Federation), the Russian National Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre (Russian Federation), the MAAVA World Network for Linguistic Diversity and UNESCO for making this event possible and for their continued efforts for safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity.

I wish all success in the organization and holding of this major Global Expert Meeting.