

**ABINIA : ASOCIACIÓN DE ESTADOS  
IBEROAMERICANOS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LAS BIBLIOTECAS  
NACIONALES DE  
LOS PAISES DE IBEROAMERICA:**

## **REPORT ON PROGRESS**

**CELIA RIBEIRO ZAHER — PRESIDENT 1999-2002  
HONORARY PRESIDENT 2003**



The new organizational structure of ABINIA, which was originally an association of national libraries and has become an intergovernmental organization in 1999 with a new constitutive act, has come into force on its last XIII General Assembly held in Rio de Janeiro, from 12 to 14 November 2002.

At this Assembly only the representatives of governments, which have endorsed the Constitutive Act approved in 1999 in Lima, Peru, were eligible to vote and to be candidates for the elective jobs within the Organization. Other representatives from National Libraries participated fully on deliberations but only with voice. Since it was the first official Assembly of the new structure as an intergovernmental association it was earmarked to elect new officials for the seats of President, Vice-president and officers with a mandate of two years each. The new elected members are:

President:  
Eliades Acosta – Director of the National Library CUBA

Vice-President:  
Gonzalo Catalán – Director of the National Library CHILE

Officers  
Nitzia Barrantes, Technical Director of the National Library of PANAMA

Rosa Maria Fernandez, Technical Director of the National Library of MEXICO

Natividad Correas, Technical Director of the National Library of SPAIN

Sael Ibañez, Director of the National Library of VENEZUELA

The Executive Secretary was also elected for the new organization in the person of the previous executive secretary from Venezuela, Alphonso Quintero, for a new period of two years.

The outgoing President of ABINIA Mrs. Celia Ribeiro Zaher, Technical Director of the National Library of Brazil, who served from 1999 to 2002 was elected Honorary President, post especially created by the General Assembly for this purpose.

It was selected Mexico as the next venue for the next General Assembly and the dates will be 20 to 24 November 2004 with the theme <Towards a Digital Library>. For the last years a central theme have been selected to orient the discussions and permit an Open Forum with participation from others than the National Library directors.

During the XIII General Assembly held in Rio de Janeiro it was approved a new Internal statutes for its work, as well as for the General Assembly. It was also confirmed Venezuela as its permanent headquarters and the basic document to establish a host country with Venezuela to ensure its diplomatic status which is under study by the Government of Venezuela.

Besides the several projects approved for different topics it should be noted the decision to request IFLA to create new IFLA/PAC centers in order to decentralize the activities of preservation and conservation throughout Latin America and give emphasis to centers in Brazil, Chile and Trinidad and Tobago. This request was based on the growing need to respond to assistance to countries in the Region, which are located far from the Center in Venezuela. Proceedings have been followed to officially request the establishment of such centers through agreements between National Libraries and IFLA, in order to host those new PAC centers to provide assistance and training.

The central theme of the Assembly on Rio de Janeiro was < Information for all: the role of libraries in the process of digital inclusion>

This organization of the Assembly provided an opportunity for Directors of National Libraries to meet with Directors of Public Libraries and discuss and listen to common problems and networking, with a view to minimize problems derived from the need for training in digital formats and the archival heritage and its access, protection and storage.

It also was discussed and endorsed the need to prepare for disaster at the libraries and a special meeting will be held on the occasion of the next General Assembly, in Mexico. Manuals from Portugal and Spain were distributed on instructions on how to deal with disaster prevention in libraries and to serve for adaptation and application in organizing preventive measures.

In order to organize work decentralized it was decided to create sub region committees for Mercosur, Andean Community, Central-America y Panama and The Caribbean region.

New projects were approved concerning the Recuperation of the Chilean Memory in Exile; Access to Iberoamerican Anthologies; Bibliography of Centro-America, Union Catalog of Musical Collections for XIX and XX centuries.

A recommendation was approved by the XII General Assembly held from 17 to 19 October 2001 in Lisbon, Portugal, of international pertinence, concerning the destruction of the libraries located at the World Trade Center of New York and the possible destruction of cultural heritage, as result of terrorism and armed conflicts.

## THE LISBON DECLARATION

The Lisbon Declaration signed by ABINIA representatives on 19 October 2001 in Lisbon, Portugal states that:

Condemns acts of terrorism in whatever form, considering them against Humanity and endangering cultural goods and heritage, and deplores the destruction of the 80 libraries, located at the Twin Towers in New York, which was a result of such acts.

Considers inadmissible these attempts which are against the essence of the human being and of society, and which results in the loss of cultural heritage, which markers the evolution of mankind.

Takes upon its members to intensify work towards the betterment of all people and diffuse peace and culture among men in pursuit of peace on Earth, as proclaimed by UNESCO.

In the face of the serious treats against cultural heritage declares that it believes in efforts such as the Biblioteca of Alexandria that represents the eternal symbol of culture and wisdom.

That such thinking was expressed on the known intellectual and free thinker of the Region Jose Martí *Ser cultos es el mode de ser libres, y ser buenos es el unico mode de ser dichosos*. To be cultivated is a way to be free, and to be kind is the only way to achieve happiness.

On this occasion of my last representation as ABINIA President, I would like to thank the Presidency of CDNL for opening a space for ABINIA in the last years, which permitted us to make our voice to be heard through our report to this Assembly of Directors of National Libraries all over the world.