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## Library and Information Association of South Africa

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### **SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK**

LIASA has declared **16-21 March 2009 South African Library Week**. During this week stakeholders will celebrate and promote library and information services throughout South Africa with the theme: **"Access for all @ your library"**.

The theme expresses that all human beings have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts in public, (Article 19, UN UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS). Under the Disability Act 2005, Local Authorities are required to promote and facilitate universal access to all public spaces, buildings and services under their control. The current challenge is establishing the roles, rights, and responsibilities of our libraries and archives in providing public access to this information.

As Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Z. Pallo Jordan reminded us in his keynote speech at the Opening Ceremony of the IFLA/World Library and Information Congress (Aug 2007, Durban), the eighth clause of the Freedom Charter says "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened to all" and continues "All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands". Nowhere is this better reflected than @ your library where one can get access through books, internet and other electronic and digital media.

LIASA through its diverse membership is driving the process to make South African Library Week a celebration of the country's intellectual and literacy heritage. The Week is an important date on the national calendar when all types of libraries across the country use it as an opportunity to market their services to their users, the broader community, civil society and decision makers. These efforts would hopefully contribute to the understanding of the important role that libraries play in a democratic society, advancing literacy and making the basic human right of freedom of access to information a reality by making their services available to the most marginalised in our society, for example, the illiterate, the disabled and people in under-resourced rural areas. During this period LIASA aims to make all South Africans aware that libraries contribute to nation-building and improving the quality of life of all who use them, through providing opportunities to access a world information and other cultures.

It has become tradition to launch the Library Week in a different province of the country each year. The **South African Library Week 2009** will be launched at the Bessie Head Library in Pietermaritzburg, hosted by the KZN Branch of LIASA.

It is LIASA's vision to celebrate a truly national library week, one that will embrace all types of libraries and all kinds of library users and potential users.

The National PRO, Ms Mokgadi Senyolo, is the contact person for further information Tel: (011) 717 1954 or 083 740 8245 or e-mail [Mokgadi.senyolo@wits.ac.za](mailto:Mokgadi.senyolo@wits.ac.za).

Library greetings

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**R. MORE**  
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