

Report on the 8th Meeting of the International Friends.

1. The International Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina held their 8th meeting 8-9 December 2005 at the BA Conference Center. Participants represented 18 Friends' Associations from all over the world, including Egyptians.
2. The meeting was inaugurated by Dr. Ismail Serageldin, Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, who welcomed the Friends and thanked them for their confidence in the dream of reviving the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. In his report, he gave a full coverage of BA components, activities, events, and achievements over the past three years. He stated that the BA is a good citizen of Alexandria in that it is participating in the sustainable development of the city. He also mentioned the BA nine themes and 100 projects, and suggested that each of the Friends' Associations adopt one of its projects. Dr. Serageldin said that support of the basics, spreading the word and offering advice and criticism are all welcome. He also stressed on the systematic development and sharing, of lists of contacts and networking besides strengthening links with the Friends.
3. The opening session was followed by the Friends' gift donation ceremony, and then representatives from each association reported on some of their activities within their own countries, in support of BA.
4. Professor Mostapha El Abbadi proposed that the Friends should coordinate their efforts by concentrating their annual gift of books to the BA in some major work of special value, and suggested for the 2006 gift, the *Patrologiae cursus completus*.
5. The Baltimore Friends, represented by Dr. Abdel Wahab El Abd, briefed the conveners on their coming project, setting-up of the Egyptian corner "to bring the true story of Egypt to the people of America, to counteract negative perceptions, to build bridges of understanding between the American and Egyptian communities" from their mission statement.
6. The Australian Friends, represented by Mr. Lorenzo Montesini, suggested that the International Friends Conference be extended to three days. He said that it should include workshops to facilitate interaction and discussion between the Friends. He also suggested strict time limits for reports that should be written and handed over to Mrs. Mona El Nashar prior to the meeting.
7. The UK Friends, represented by Mr. David Wardrop, said that the Friends should come up with ideas that will attract more attention, and that they must explore more possibilities and dimensions. He commended the Med-cities program but said that UK Friends were not content with the progress of the Peace Library. He said that if the Peace Library comes to Alexandria, it will bring many NGOs working in peace and in conflict prevention and resolution. The Middle East, he said, is the only area in the world where there is no center for peace.

8. Mr. Armando Milani, famous international graphic designer and member of the Swiss Friends, presented the poster he designed for the BA. It was approved by Dr. Serageldin.

9. The Californian Friends represented by Professor Rosalie Cuneo Amer and Carmela Ruby suggested creating sub-groups or clusters based on professional interest and discipline to post on the BA Friends website in order to work with BA on its projects. They also suggested that BA publications of the dialogue forum, being of major consequence, should be translated. They also recommended that for the next meeting's poetry reading program, which they believe to be an important learning experience, the written text and English translation be presented with a brief bio of the poet and statement of the poetic form. All this information should be combined into a poetry publication. The poems should also be read in their original languages. Furthermore, the 2006 annual conference should have the theme of "Peace" for the poetry reading program.