

Information Access Working Group**Dr. Carol Gluck****Member, US CULCON Panel**

The work of the Information Access Working Group exemplifies what CULCON does best. It defines a problem, mobilizes the appropriate people to examine the problem and challenges the field to find solutions and implement them.

You have read the report from the working group. The US side is grateful for the efforts of our Japanese counterparts over the past four years to move our work forward. We are especially gratified by the alliance between NACSIS and the National Coordinating Committee on Japanese Library Resources, known as the NCC. This partnership, formalized in a memorandum of understanding last year, may well serve as an international model of cooperation and achievement.

We believe that the library initiatives constitute the most significant accomplishment of our Working Group. Librarians today stand as the gateway to knowledge in all forms, from rare manuscripts to the World Wide Web. They provide information to the scholarly community, to business, and to the general public. While we talk of "libraries without walls," we must also foster the development of "libraries across borders." For libraries have now become the very crossroads of "information access." We therefore salute the NACSIS-NCC alliance and encourage its continued progress.

We began with the understanding that the Information Access Working Group should produce precisely this sort of concrete result. Here, again, CULCON succeeded in going beyond its earlier role of merely making recommendations to promoting the implementation of its binational proposals. You have read the document produced at the meeting last June. It outlines the progress that has already been made on both sides in specific areas and lays out issues to be addressed in the future. We applaud these advances and encourage continued cooperation among libraries around the world.

The Working Group has successfully launched a goodly list of projects that the libraries are committed to pursuing. Both the Japanese and American groups are energized and motivated. The US side therefore believes that while we continue to express our support for these activities, the time has come to allocate CULCON's resources to new challenges that would benefit from our proven matchmaking skills.

I have been honored to work with Ono-san and all our Japanese colleagues on these issues and want to express our sincere appreciation for their energy, insight and cooperation. Thank you very much.