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Nancy Williamson
FID/CR News Editor

Message from the FID/CR Chair

On January 1st of this year I took over from Nancy Williamson as chairman of FID/CR. It will be difficult to follow so hard-working and dedicated a predecessor who has done so much over the past eight years to maintain and stimulate interest in the Committee's activities. I am delighted that she has offered to continue as editor of *Classification Issues* and *FID/CR News*, an offer that I have gladly accepted.

The first event for which I shall be responsible is the "Dorking revisited" conference, the 6th in the FID series of International Study Conferences on Classification Research. By the time this message is printed the conference will already be past history, but as I write, plans are well advanced and the programme completed for what promises to be a stimulating three days, with a well-balanced selection of papers representing the old and the new. It is a pleasure to see names such as Mills, Vickery and Coates among the contributors, as well as papers on up to the minute issues from a later generation. A business meeting of FID/CR members will be held during the three day period. A full report on the conference, whose proceedings are to be published by FID, will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

In addition to our own 1997 conference, plans are already well advanced for the 1998 FID general conference in New Delhi. Since there was no great evidence of interest in a whole-day seminar on classification matters at the Graz conference, it has been decided to have a half-day seminar, with invited papers, followed by the customary business meeting of the membership. The Ranganathan Award will be presented at the New Delhi Conference and nominations should be forwarded to me as chairman of the award committee, together with a full supporting statement, not later than May 1st 1998.

Also in 1998 at the Amsterdam IFLA meeting, there are plans for a one-day workshop on the *Universal Decimal Classification*. Although the classification ceased to be the property of FID with the foundation of the UDC Consortium in 1993, FID maintains a strong interest in the scheme through its membership in that Consortium. Until the beginning of this year Ben Goedegebuure chaired the Executive

Committee of the Consortium and he was responsible for the smooth transfer of ownership and for guiding the Consortium through the early stages, often in circumstances that were far from easy. He will be greatly missed in that context, as in all the activities of FID that he directed with such great enthusiasm. The Consortium gave him a farewell dinner in The Hague prior to its February meeting. On his departure, FID invited me, as chairman of FID/CR, to take over responsibility for representing it on the Consortium.

At the end of January Mr Oomes, Technical Director of the UDCC since 1993, left the employment of the Consortium. At the time of writing, his post is in the process of being advertised, but the office in The Hague remains in the capable hands of Mrs. Koper, and all matters relating to UDC should be directed to the Secretariat and will then be forwarded either to the Consortium chairman or to the editor, as appropriate.

It seems as though the next two years will be as action-packed with events relating to classification as the past two have been, and this is rightly so. The importance of knowledge organization in the present electronic age, when more and more information is being made available to an international audience, cannot be over-stressed. We live in exciting and challenging times for our field of interest and we need to take every opportunity to stress the importance and value of our work to those responsible for mounting information electronically. Much time is wasted through ignorance of work that has already been done on classification and poorly organized, and confusing information creates dissatisfaction for all. We must act to ensure that well constructed search engines based on the solid principles with which we are familiar are made available to those who at present struggle with poor organization and an excess of unwanted data.

I am very honoured to be asked to act as chairman of FID/CR at this time, and I hope that we shall have an interesting and fruitful period ahead of us.

I. C. McIlwaine