

Joint Statement by IFLA and LCA at WIPO, Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (2008)

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IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

LCA: Library Copyright Alliance

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The International Federation of Library Associations, representing through its 1,700 member organizations in 150 countries hundreds of thousands of professional librarians around the world, and the Library Copyright Alliance, a coalition of five major American library associations representing over 87,000 individuals and institutions, offer this joint statement in connection with the discussion of documents CDIP/1/3, CDIP/2/2, and Information Note 1 issued at this meeting.

A number of the activities under discussion, both from the list of 19 proposals identified for immediate implementation, and the list of activities proposed to implement the remaining 26 proposals, involve public awareness, education, training and outreach on various aspects of intellectual property. A challenge to these programs will be creating a workable equilibrium between intellectual property protection and the special needs of developing countries and least developed countries to make available the benefits of new information and communications technologies, and the content they provide, to transform the lives of citizens.

The success of the Development Agenda will depend on concrete efforts made to facilitate access to knowledge and technology that foster creativity and innovation and to strengthen WIPO activities aimed at this goal. Unless priority is placed at this stage of the implementation on expanding the knowledge base through specific measures that bring more existing works of intellectual property into use in developing countries and least developed countries, the Development Agenda will be compromised.

Educational programs are a critical activity to this end. Libraries support activities that are central to the work of the Development Agenda, and are fully committed to its success. In the area of copyright, libraries are uniquely positioned to contribute to the educational programs organized by WIPO which establish and maintain the fine balance between rights holders and users of information. Libraries are significant stakeholders in the intellectual property structure as they are major purchasers of content; they negotiate and manage rights and access to content; and they provide a direct link to the user community. As intermediaries, librarians and information specialists can provide critical expertise in areas such as licensing of commercial databases, implementation and instruction in the use of electronic resources and specialized databases, approaches to copyright licensing and new licensing models, creation

of digital repositories to increase the knowledge base in developing countries, understanding of the international scope of the public domain, and application of limitations and exceptions in the law that facilitate the creation of new knowledge while respecting the rights of copyright holders.

Current and proposed WIPO activities include programs offered by the WIPO Academy, programs on technical assistance, and Geneva-based programs. They also include sub-regional, regional and inter-regional seminars and workshops on copyright issues, as well as rosters of consultants available to Member States in specialized areas to enhance the programs. We encourage WIPO and its Member States to consider the importance of including the international library community in these efforts, particularly as they involve educational, academic and research institutions.

In supporting access to knowledge and technology to foster innovation, adequate limitations and exceptions for the purposes of education, scholarship, and creativity, and a robust public domain, the library community is prepared to contribute fully to the development goals of WIPO and its Member States through educational initiatives. The work of librarians contributes to a balanced approach to copyright education, in the sincere interest of bridging the digital divide.

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