



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

18th of November 2020

IFLA's statement made at the 40th meeting of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights at the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Thank you chair.

We would like to congratulate you on your new role. IFLA is confident in your ability to initiate impactful work on exceptions and limitations to copyright. IFLA thanks the secretariat for its work on the report, which provides firm evidence of consensus among delegates in particular around the need to allow for heritage preservation and access.

Now, therefore, is the time for action.

Because the lack of clarity in existing international law leads not only to inadequate copyright laws, but uncertainty for institutions when trying to work with digital tools, or across borders to ensure the survival and availability of heritage.

Mr Chair, in the context of the global pandemic that we are currently facing, we have seen the costs of leaving things up to chance. Rightholder goodwill is of course welcome, but it should not be the case that the core work of libraries with legitimately acquired materials depends on this.

IFLA therefore supports, more than ever, the need to adopt, adapt or interpret laws to allow libraries, archives, museums, educators and researchers to function in a digital environment.

Yet COVID is not the only crisis we face. This time next year, governments will meet in Glasgow for COP26. This Committee has the potential to facilitate efforts to preserve collections threatened by climate change.

Clearly in the medium term, we believe that text-based work is essential. Yet in the short term, by the next meeting, a known expert such as Professor Crews could be asked to prepare model provisions on preservation and access for discussion by Members. This, already, would help.

In parallel, this Committee can offer valuable guidance to members about the interpretation of current international laws at a time of COVID-19.

Mr Chair, rather than being left behind, as individual countries or groups race ahead, we have confidence that WIPO can continue to show its relevance.

To ensure that, as far as possible, the health crisis and the climate crisis do not become an education, a research, a heritage crisis.

Thank you, chair.