



World Intellectual Property Organization
Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights
23rd meeting

Statement by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
November 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, the international body representing over 750,000 library and information professionals in more than 150 countries worldwide.

IFLA thanks the Committee for adopting a workplan focusing on libraries and archives during SCCR23. We welcome the comments by many delegations recognising the important role copyright limitations and exceptions for libraries and archives play in implementing important public policy goals, most critically: literacy, education, research, employability, health awareness, and access for the disabled.

Libraries enable and encourage **creativity and innovation**, a major WIPO goal. By collecting, organising, preserving and providing access to information, libraries support society in general and the cultural and scientific sectors in particular. Libraries foster the sharing of ideas and knowledge, while stimulating and enabling creativity and innovation around the world; they are distinctive guardians of the public trust. Without adequate access to information, often sought in libraries, authors and creators would not be able to create new works, innovate and expand local and global knowledge. And libraries also play a key, too-seldom-recognized role in educating the public about the rights of authors.

Today, the ability to produce and use knowledge has become a major factor in development and is critical to a nation's comparative advantage. But for libraries to fulfil their public-interest mission, they need adequate copyright limitations and exceptions to provide balance between the rights of users and creators of protected works. Unfortunately, libraries and archives currently work under a patchwork of provisions that differ in scope and effect from country to country. These provisions increasingly fail to address the legal and policy challenges and opportunities of the global digital environment. Now more than ever, libraries need copyright frameworks that recognise the importance, needs, legitimate expectations and rights of libraries and their users in a digital age.

The Draft WIPO Treaty on Exceptions and Limitations for Persons with Disabilities, Educational and Research Institutions, Libraries and Archives proposed by the African Group marks a giant, visionary leap forward in outlining ways to establish this balance. IFLA is proud to have worked with the African Group, as well as representatives of other Member States, on text-based proposals to ensure that the needs and rights of library users everywhere are fulfilled .

These needs, identified in focused dialog between IFLA and librarians from nearly 100 countries over the past six years, are articulated in a proposal available to delegates on the tables outside this room. This proposal is intended to complement the African Group proposal, providing additional information to guide Member States in their vital discussion of library and archive issues during SCCR/23 and beyond.

IFLA believes that universal and equitable access to information and the preservation of our world's cultural heritage are vital for the social, educational, cultural, and economic well-being of people, communities, and nations in the global digital environment. IFLA looks forward to a positive dialogue with all Member States on ways to enhance human, social and economic development, and to encourage creativity and innovation by bringing balance to

the international copyright system in the 21st century, for the benefit of all members of society.

Thank you.

(557 words)