

Statement at World Intellectual Property Organization meeting of Provisional Committee on the Development Agenda

February 21, 2007

I speak on behalf of the Library Copyright Alliance, the International Federation of Library Associations, and eIFL: Electronic Information for Libraries.

We address Cluster D – Proposal 32:

“Public domain” means works that either never have been copyrighted or that are no longer within the term of protection under the applicable intellectual property laws.

Libraries all over the world are working to save – including through digitization -- older, and often endangered, materials that are in the public domain. These efforts are crucial in preserving our history and cultural heritage for future generations. Access to the public domain fosters learning, innovation and creation of new works. Those works may themselves then be subject to new rights, but that is a benefit not a burden of a rich public domain. WIPO should make this an actionable proposal.

We will be glad to meet with delegates who wish to discuss these concepts and to refine the proposals before this committee.

We also address Cluster D - Proposals 24, 25 & 26:

Widespread access to the information contained in scientific articles – particularly articles based on research funded by governments -- is an essential, inseparable component of Member States’ investment in science and transfer of technology.

This and other scientific information should be shared in cost-effective ways that take advantage of the Internet, stimulate further discovery and innovation, and advance the translation of this knowledge into public benefits.

Enhanced access to and expanded sharing of information will lead to usage by millions of scientists, professionals, and individuals, and will deliver an accelerated return on the public’s investment.

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The Library Copyright Alliance is a coalition of the five major US library associations: American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, Medical Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association.

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