



SCCR24: IFLA statement on a Treaty for Visually Impaired and Print Disabled People

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I am speaking on behalf of IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions; and eIFL, Electronic Information for Libraries. IFLA is of the firm view that *now* is the time to send a recommendation to the next WIPO General Assembly that it should convene a diplomatic conference in 2013 on a treaty for visually impaired and print disabled people; and we are heartened by the progress on text-based discussions made today toward that goal in SCCR24.

In 1981 the governing bodies of WIPO and UNESCO created a 'Working Group on Access by the Visually and Auditory Handicapped to Material Reproducing Works Produced by Copyright'. Here we are, 31 years and a technology revolution later, yet WIPO *still* has not produced a copyright treaty that provides *equal* access to information for people with disabilities. Distinguished delegates will find on the table outside this room a recent letter from the Chair of the UN's Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities addressed to the Chair of this Committee in support of WIPO's achieving "an international instrument, which would ensure that copyright is not a barrier to information, culture and information for persons with disabilities" and confirming that "a binding treaty of this nature would be in conformity with the spirit" of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Now is the time to act; the need is urgent. Visually impaired and print disabled people are deprived of the basic human right to read because this committee has not been able to agree. The library community, which is the major provider of services assisting blind people to access information, believes that the proposed treaty that the World Blind Union and related organizations is seeking is right, fair, just, and long overdue. The Beijing spirit of action that the Committee exhibited only last month must now be directed to addressing the compelling needs of visually impaired and print disabled people as your *top* priority.

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