



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

**Statement on
Limitations and Exceptions for Persons with Print Disabilities**

November 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, have the floor.

All types of libraries and library users are represented within IFLA. The world's most important library organizations and institutions serving print disabled persons work together in our Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities standing committee. This committee takes as its mandate from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where it is stated that print disabled people have the right to equal access to books, knowledge and information at the same time, cost and quality as everyone else. Libraries are key instruments in the information chain for serving print disabled persons and enjoy a position of trust in the disabled community. IFLA is consequently very keen to see progress in the area of a binding treaty to remove copyright barriers which prevent blind, partially sighted, dyslexic and other "reading disabled" people from accessing books.

The SCCR's deliberations have now reached the point where a solution to the problem is in sight. IFLA believes that a treaty is the necessary conclusion of the great efforts that have been made within this committee in recent years and that now is absolutely the time to do it. IFLA strongly favours a binding instrument – a treaty – as we believe that the alternatives, such as a recommendation or two-stage approach, will add years of delay and cost. Mr. Chairman, disabled people have a right to equal access to goods and services on a par with the able-bodied but so far their access to the right to read has been inferior and voluntary agreements have not succeeded in adequately addressing their needs. This must be put right now. Only a binding Treaty can possibly achieve this in a way that will stand the test of time. We urge the Committee to recognize this fact and to agree on a treaty instrument.

Thank you for your attention.