

## **Statements by the World Blind Union**

### **1. Paraphrase of submission made to Intersessional Meeting on 21st June 2005, by David Mann, World Blind Union.**

There are an estimated 180 million blind and partially sighted people in the World. Much of this sight loss is preventable, and affordable medicines would contribute to prevention. Prevention would not only benefit the individuals but support the economic development of the countries in which they live.

We are very disappointed that there is so little reference to disabled people in most of the papers submitted to the Intersessional Meeting. Disabled people must be included in WIPO's Development Agenda.

Blind and partially sighted people will contribute to economic development if educated and if employed. Copyright restrictions without appropriate and adequate exceptions hinder the development of the individual and the country in which s/he lives. Lack of agreements on the international transfer of material modified for access by blind and partially sighted people also hinders the economic development of both individual and society. Poorly designed or poorly applied technological protection measures impede access by those having to use assistive technology, and so also hinder the development of both individual and society.

The papers submitted by distinguished delegations contain many proposals for research or other studies. These will be worthwhile only if WIPO and its members are prepared to act on their findings and recommendations.

We support research, inter alia, into:

- \* The economic impact of territorial limitations to exceptions to copyright;
- \* The true legal position in respect of the import or export of material created under copyright exceptions.

We commend WIPO for its work in re-writing and promoting its "Draft Law" on copyright. We also commend it for commissioning research into the impact of digital rights management schemes in the fields of education and of access by visually impaired people. Again, we trust WIPO and its members will act upon the outcome of the latter.

## **2. Contribution prepared for Intersessional Meeting on 22nd June, 2005, but not made because delegation had to leave early.**

Referring to the list of proposals collated by the distinguished delegation of Brazil: referring to Item 4 on the principles that should inform technical assistance, and the items on norm setting, the World Blind Union believes that the Development Agenda should turn to WIPO's parent body and base its guiding principles on Articles 19 and 27 of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights. These articles recognise the rights of creators and inventors on the one hand and the general public on the other.

### Article 19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

### Article 27:

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

These principles are echoed in the more recent UN Convention on the rights of the Child.

The Development Agenda should also in due course take full account of the UN Convention on the Rights and dignity of Disabled People, currently being formulated under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.

Turning to the list of proposals tabled by the distinguished delegation of Bahrain on behalf of several member countries, we commend to the Meeting in particular Item 4 on national strategies and Item 5 proposing studies into the social, economic and cultural impact of IP systems. These proposals offer scope for concrete work addressing real situations. We recommend they be extended to cover the international impact of IP systems as well.

David Mann  
World Blind Union  
24th June, 2005