



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE BIBLIOTHECAIRES ET DES BIBLIOTHEQUES
INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG BIBLIOTHEKARISCHER VERBÄNDE UND EINRICHTUNGEN
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE ASOCIACIONES DE BIBLIOTECARIOS Y BIBLIOTECAS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ БИБЛИОТЕЧНЫХ АССОЦИАЦИЙ И УЧРЕЖДЕНИЙ
国际图书馆协会与机构联合会

الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات ومؤسسات المكتبات

His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa,
President, Republic of South Africa,
Union Buildings
Private Bag X1000,
PRETORIA,
0001
South Africa

Date: 29 October 2019
Our ref: S1/gl/sw
Subject: Copyright Amendment Bill

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), regarding the Copyright Amendment Bill which currently awaits your signature.

My organisation – IFLA – is the global organisation for libraries, representing the interests of libraries and library users around the world. We are lucky to benefit from a strong South African contribution to our work, in particular though your country's hosting of two World Library and Information Congresses in the past twelve years and the engagement of your librarians.

As part of our advocacy for policies that enable libraries to provide users with equitable and meaningful access to information, we have been very supportive of South Africa's efforts to reform its copyright laws.

Drawing on established existing best practice from around the world, the current Copyright Bill stands to give your country the rules it needs to continue to promote home-grown education and research. The Bill as it stands today will facilitate efforts to create a new generation of researchers, innovators and writers in South Africa, reducing dependence on imported publications and multinational companies.

It will also bring much-needed transparency to collective management of rights, helping to build the legitimacy of copyright in the eyes of users, and of course implement the Marrakesh Treaty, to the benefit of some of the most vulnerable in society. In so doing, the Bill will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, notably around access to information and education, and the sharing of knowledge in order to provide for stronger, fairer and more sustainable growth.

[cc: HE Mr Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade and Industry
HE Mr Nathi Mthethwa, Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture
HE Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Mjnister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Ms Nikki Crowster, President, Library and Information Association of South Africa
Dr. N. Sentoo, National Council for Library and Information Services]



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I am aware that you are facing pressure to reject this legislation, based on questionable assertions about international law and claims of negative impacts that have been firmly dismissed by governments elsewhere.

I note with particular concern the pressure being applied by foreign governments, notably by the government of the United States on whose own fair use provisions the proposed South African reforms are closely modelled. Efforts to subject other countries to less flexible rules than those enjoyed by Americans merely risks reinforcing global development divides.

I therefore hope that you will be able to sign the Bill into law, and set a thereby show your leadership in Africa and around the world.

Kind regards,

Gerald Leitner
Secretary General

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