Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights: Twenty-Ninth Session

December 8 – 12 2014

Why income from secondary uses of copyright works is indispensable to authors

The International Authors Forum represents authors from the text, screenwriting and visual arts sectors and their interests in copyright. Its members are organisations representing over 260,000 authors on all continents.

1. Ultimately, it is authors’ work that is being considered in the proposals being discussed at the World Intellectual Property Organisation. There are individual authors whose rights are involved, in all countries. Those rights must be given primary consideration.

2. Authors need fair remuneration if they are to continue to produce the work everyone wants to access – without payment they will not be able to continue to create. The diversity and quality of content will suffer and the quantity of works produced will be limited.

3. All authors want the widest possible lawful access to their works and recognise that libraries, archives and educational institutions are vital to broadening and encouraging access for all. However, as just one example from across the world, research by the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society in the UK has shown that authors, particularly of educational works in subjects such as geography, history and philosophy, will not continue to produce textbooks without adequate remuneration.

4. There are already international copyright provisions in place that work well to enable the development of licensing frameworks which strike a fair balance between access and use through libraries, archives and educational institutions and payment that sustains livelihoods and the continued creative output of individual authors.

5. Authors believe that these existing provisions contain sufficient flexibility for countries represented at WIPO to continue to work towards national solutions according to local needs through the current licensing frameworks.

6. Authors recognise that situations vary around the world and that each country aims to respond to its local needs. However, in no country are authors able to work and create effectively when they are entirely denied remuneration or else inadequately paid.

7. While each country represented at WIPO contains libraries, archives and educational institutions seeking to secure access to works, it must not be forgotten that there are authors in each of the WIPO Member State whose rights and property are affected.

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