



**WARSAW POLAND
AGM 2002**

Chairman's report for the IFRRO AGM 2002 in Warsaw

Dear Friends,

In 2001 we had a fascinating AGM in Capetown. In the past years our regional committee for Africa and Middle East throughout the years had developed a number of activities in the region, but it was the first time that our Federation had its annual meeting on this continent. There were a number of very important subjects we discussed during and around our AGM. Under the guidance of the Chairman of our regional committee for Africa and the Middle East, John-Willy Rudolph, an African seminar was held. During that session, representatives of rights owners, governments and other interested parties fruitfully exchanged information about the development of legislation and the promotion of RRO initiatives in the region.

During one of the business sessions, experts from the region, from WIPO and IFRRO-members discussed another major topic: Traditional Knowledge. During the AGM 2000 in Stockholm, IFRRO already dealt with this issue. On the basis of an excellent presentation by WIPO, IFRRO adopted a resolution stating the importance of protection of traditional knowledge and offering the support of IFRRO and its RRO-members in the administration of such systems. In Capetown, we developed this work further and we confirmed our dedication for the development of an instrument enabling the droit d'auteur and copyright systems to meet with a system for the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.

During the Annual General Meeting, the proposals for new statutes and an adjusted structure for IFRRO were discussed and unanimously adopted. On the basis of those new statutes the number of board members was extended. The members therefore elected new board members also because of the fact that Maureen Duffy decided to step down. We all warmly welcomed the new board members and wished them all the success in their new role for the Federation. The IFRRO membership is very grateful for the excellent way that Maureen has served the good cause of our Federation. She has impressed us all with her diplomatic skills, her vast knowledge of copyright in all its aspects and her dedication to bring forward the creators' perspective in our day to day work.

The adjusted statutes also gave the membership the opportunity to elect an Honorary President. By acclamation, our former Chairman and longstanding board member Tarja Koskinen-Olsson was elected for that position. With this title, the IFRRO community expressed its warm feeling for a person who dedicated an important part of her professional career to the promotion, the development and execution of copyright in all its aspects and reprographic reproduction right in particular.

In the election process, I had the great honour of being re-elected as President.

Our Secretary General, Stephanie Faulkner, earlier, already decided to return to her home country Australia. She continued working for IFRRO from Perth on a part time basis until we were able to find a successor. The search committee (Peter Shepherd, Maureen Duffy, Lex Lefebvre and myself) interviewed a number of candidates. Finally, we unanimously nominated to the board, Veronica Williams, as our new Secretary General. The board accepted the nomination and as of February 2002, Veronica is in function. Veronica will have an opportunity to present herself to the membership during the AGM in Warsaw. On behalf of all of us, I wish her all the best in her difficult but challenging job. I am sure that she and her colleagues in the Secretariat can count on the support of the full membership in their work.

The IFRRO community is facing many challenges. One of the major issues we need to handle is a split in our attention between the “new” and the “old”. Some of our members are already well advanced in digital licensing. They use DRM-systems and identifiers to provide users with an adequate license and rights owners with title specific distribution. It is evident that this is a vital step towards an IFRRO wide service to rights owners and users. We all should learn from those colleagues and invest time, money and creativity to develop similar services throughout the world.

On the other hand, however, the large majority of basic reprographic reproduction in the world is not licensed yet. IFRRO and its membership should therefore continue to put major efforts in the development of legislation and RROs in those countries and regions where there is no sufficient protection and executive power yet. The lack of adequate protection is not a problem of developing countries alone. Also in areas with a long history of copyright protection, instruments to cover reprographic reproduction are not always available.

Rights owners, users and legislators can count on IFRRO and all its members in their attempts to create a well balanced system of adequate protection both in a world with digital technologies as in an environment with analogue means!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Beemsterboer', with a horizontal line under the name.

André Beemsterboer
President