

**7<sup>th</sup> IPA International Copyright Symposium**  
**Opening Speech Herman P. Spruijt**  
**28 February 2010 Abu Dhabi**

On behalf of the International Publishers Association I would like to welcome you to our 7<sup>th</sup> international copyright symposium. We are delighted to be here and are grateful to our local hosts, ADACH and KITAB, the Emirati Publishers Association, as well as to our co-organisers from the Arab Publishers Association.

In particular I would like to welcome

**H. E. Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Al Shehhi**, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economy of the UAE,

**Dr Zaki Anwar Nusseibeh**, Deputy Chairman Board of Directors ADACH, Advisor of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs,

**Ahmed Al Hamdan**, vice-president of the Arab Publishers Association,

**Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi**, Chairperson Emirates Publishers Association and

**Ms Ahdaf Soueif**, author from Egypt.

Dear colleagues and friends of books and the book trade,  
Peace upon you!

I would also like to welcome the more than 270 participants from 53 countries present. I look forward to our intensive discussions over the next two days. I would particularly like to welcome the representatives from 15 countries from the region supported by KITAB and 14 representatives from publishers associations from around the world that have been invited to attend by IPA and are sponsored by Kopinor. I would expressly like to thank KITAB and Kopinor for their support.

This is IPA's 7<sup>th</sup> special Conference on copyright and copyright policy. Some outsiders may ask, why publishers place so much importance on copyright law and copyright policy. Many think immediately of enforcement and piracy, but it would be wrong to limit the role of copyright to enforcement. Publishers' primary role is to create and to publish. Fighting piracy is a cost of business.

There are other reasons, far more important why copyright is so important to us. Copyright is the legal principle that expresses society's respect for authors and creators, and the personal and commercial interests in their creations.

Firstly, and most importantly, copyright is at the heart of the relationship between authors and publishers. Authors grant publishers licences that outline the rights and obligations in this relationship. It is copyright that protects scientific authors from plagiarism and legally secures their claims of prior discovery.

Copyright is the fundament for the international trade in rights. It enables the work of translators, local publishers and distributors. It is what foreign publishers buy and invest in.

Copyright also determines the value of a publishing house, as it is not measured in the buildings owned or number of books in stock. Publishing houses are valued by assessing the rights they own.

On the internet copyright moves centre stage: where we no longer sell physical objects but digital files, copyright is the basis for the use of such files.

On the internet, every transaction is a rights transaction, based on the notion of copyright. Even the 'creative commons movement' has at its heart special licensing agreements.

On the internet, copyright enables new business models, including those that make content available for free...

Many people think that publishing is only now waking up to the opportunities of the digital environment. In fact the opposite is true. We as publishers have been following our users wherever they go, adapting our products to their changing needs and behaviours.

When scientists and academics began creating international networks and the Internet, publishers quickly followed. Today more than 90% of academic and professional journals are published electronically and many publishers can't wait to see their remaining publications go the same way.

When CDs became popular with customers they quickly found their way into the back of books and were abandoned when readers lost interest in this carrier.

The Internet has created new opportunities for publishing. copying, distribution. And making available, has now been democratized to the point where anyone can make perfect copies and distribute content freely on the Internet. We see now seen initiatives of libraries to digitise their entire collections, irrespective of the often complex copyright ownership. For many this appears to be a spectacular, an overwhelming threat. For publishers, this is part of their changing business and must be approached with the same kind of pragmatic, rational and farsighted business vision that we also expect from our policy makers when they consider changes in law.

Today all major educational publishers have developed electronic products alongside their, still very successful, paper books. The Kindle, the Sony reader, the countless other devices and, soon, the I-Pad have equally created the markets in which publishers follow their readers, without losing sight of the needs and behaviours of their readers.

As said, most think of the Internet and focus on the issue of piracy. This is indeed an important issue. Compliance is part of a regulated, fair and transparent market place. It is one aspect of many, including the legitimate, albeit limited place for copyright exceptions.

This leads me to my final point. Copyright is not a panacea, not a fortress against theft, and not a political ideology. It is a tool that must be adapted, not only to new technologies but also to changes in Society...

Copyright is also not a western concept any more than technological progress is. All countries begin to value copyright when they see the social and economic value that a healthy local publishing industry brings.

I am confident that our discussions here in Abu Dhabi will help us understand how copyright law, copyright policy and copyright culture must be shaped in order to ensure that creative industries, in particular publishing, can play the role that society needs from us:

To enhance our culture, to enrich our knowledge economy and to support social development and international understanding through the languages of education, science and literature.

Thank You

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I would now like to introduce to you and welcome again an author who most of you will know well: Ms Ahdaf Soueif.

Ms Soueif was born in Egypt but received her education in the UK, where she is also living today. She writes exclusively in English, but her books are translated into Arabic and made her famous around the world.

Ahdaf Soueif achieved a breakthrough already with her first book "In the eye of the sun". For her second book "The map of love" she was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

Ahdaf Soueif is not only a very outspoken author and activist, but also a translator, a university teacher and regular contributor to major newspapers such as the Guardian (in the UK) and Al Ahram Weekly (in Egypt).

I am very pleased that we can welcome here today for the opening address of our Copyright Conference this truly multi-faceted and fascinating writer, Ms Ahdaf Soueif...

The floor is yours!