



Resolutions of the 29th International Publishers Congress Cape Town, South Africa 14 June 2012

The 29th International Publishers Congress (the “Congress”), represented by the publisher delegates meeting from 12 until 14 June 2012 in Cape Town, South Africa, agrees on the following:

RESOLUTIONS

1. The Congress asserts the importance of reading and education for the fulfilment of everyone’s personal aspirations and society’s full potential. Publishing is more than an industry - publishers are part of education; they are agents in the formation and progress of culture; they share and nourish the democratic values of society- and they play a critical and constructive role in the pursuit of these values. Publishers therefore undertake to work as members of civil society along with social movements to realise shared values.
2. The publishers gathered at the Congress reassert the importance of freedom of expression, including freedom to publish and artistic expression and of freedom of enterprise as fundamental human rights.
3. Publishers declare that they want the works of their authors to be universally accessible and available to all potential readers, irrespective of physical disability, or economic disadvantage. The world’s books must be affordable, available and sustainable.
4. Copyright remains an essential cornerstone for publishing and creativity in the information society. It is an engine for freedom of expression and a tool supporting the livelihoods of authors and publishers alike. The Congress therefore calls on all stakeholders to ensure that copyright remains strong and fair.
5. The Congress calls for recognition of the important role of free, entrepreneurial publishers in providing high quality content in education, whether in print or digital formats. Digital migration in education requires close cooperation between educational policy makers, technology providers, teachers and publishers. The transformation of education must not be driven by politics or technology, but by the increasing understanding of how publishers, new technologies and local teaching environments achieve better outcomes.

In the course of the seminars and debates, delegates had the opportunity to discuss a number of issues and challenges which the publishing industry faces today. The Congress therefore makes the following:

SPECIFIC DEMANDS

- a. **Publishing in All Languages:** The Congress calls on policy makers to encourage reading and authorship in the rich linguistic diversity that is the basis of many nations, in particular in Africa. Governments must coordinate national book policies promoting education, literacy and the preservation of cultural diversity.
- b. **VAT:** The Congress calls on public authorities to apply zero VAT rates on all books, whether in paper format or as e-books. Publishers will work with policy makers to make books more affordable where current tax policies create obstacles to access.
- c. **Digital Distribution:** The Congress calls on public authorities, including competition authorities, to safeguard a rich and diverse paper and digital distribution landscape, which encourages competition, innovation and dynamic change without monopolies or dominant positions.
- d. **State Publishing:** State publishing is a threat to the quality of education, a democratic culture, and the future of the knowledge economy. Readers need relevant, innovative, and diverse quality content. The Congress therefore calls on governments to refrain from nationalising educational publishing and to encourage independent, local and indigenous book industries.
- e. **Freedom of Expression and Public Figures:** The Congress calls on public figures to understand that in democratic society, the public criticism they receive is commensurate with their responsibilities and the importance of the positions they represent. Public discourse requires a diversity of views and a diversity of ways to express them peacefully.
- f. The Congress condemns the **recent attacks on freedom of expression in Tunisia**, and supports Tunisian publishers and civil society in their struggle to defend their recently gained freedoms.
- g. **Freedom of Information, Freedom of Expression and Freedom to Publish:** The Congress rejects the abuse of broad definitions of terms such as defamation, state security, state secrecy, or terrorism as dangerous inroads for censorship, harassment of the media, and undemocratic influencing. It is in the public interest to give openness and transparency their primary, due, and a prominent role in legislation.