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**Computer & Communications Industry Association**

**Intervention of CCIA on the Issue of Access to Works by the Visually Impaired  
Delivered at the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organisation  
*23rd September 2010***

CCIA offers its congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to your vice-Chairs, for your wise leadership of these Assemblies, and to the Secretariat for the hard work they have done to ensure these meetings run so smoothly.

The Computer and Communications Industry Association's members represent a broad cross-section of the information and communications technology (ICT) industries; our members collectively generate more than \$200 billion in annual revenues. They thus have a substantial stake in the effective operation of the international system of copyright and related rights as they are substantial IP owners and innovators.

We are pleased to see that there is wide agreement that effective action must be taken to deal with the problems of access to printed material by the visually impaired, and that the SCCR is at a stage where the discussion is about how to solve the problem, rather than whether to do so.

We believe that the challenge issued by Stevie Wonder so eloquently at the opening of these Assemblies – to complete work on an effective and binding solution – is one that all should endorse. Mr. Chairman, we are sure that the world will benefit from new music written by him – provided it is not about what we have not done!

To meet his challenge, we submit that a fundamental element of action at the upcoming SCCR must include adoption of a work plan with timelines and milestones that leads to a binding and effective result. The work plan should also ensure that other L&Es will be discussed, and dealt with fully, but this should be done in a way that cannot hold up progress on the VIP issue. We would not like to see discussions on all L&Es prejudiced by linking of issues.

L&Es are essential drivers of innovation and economic development which are relied upon by many industries, including ours – to illustrate this we have just this year commissioned two independent studies on the subject – one relating to fair use and its value to the US economy, and the other the economic contribution of industries in the EU that rely upon L&Es. Both are available on the tables in the CICC.

Mr. Chairman, the credibility of the international copyright system depends upon this body recognizing and creating solutions for such humanitarian needs as the pressing

problem before us today. Failure to act would raise questions as to whether the international community is capable of resolving conflicts between exclusive rights and access to knowledge. As supporters of multilateral action and of WIPO, we believe this is an additional and compelling reason to act on the VI issue – and act, as Stevie Wonder said ‘today, not tomorrow, but today.’

Mr. Chairman, we have no doubt whatsoever, like Mr. Wonder, that it is entirely possible to have strong copyright protection and for the hundreds of millions of visually impaired people to have access to copyrighted works at the same time. We have created marvels of science that have taken us to the Moon and the stars. We have conquered diseases that once killed millions. We can do this too if we, as he urged us on Monday, put ideological differences aside and “work it out.”

Mr. Chairman, with respect to broadcasting: aside from the lack of any reasonable justification in fact for any rights at all beyond the prevention of signal theft, let alone broad new rights, we have detected no change in the political landscape on this issue despite more than a decade of discussion. There is no consensus – or anything close to a consensus, on the object of protection, scope of protection, or even who the beneficiaries are to be. This issue, too, should not be allowed to detract from action in favour of the visually impaired.

We stand ready to assist WIPO’s work in this area, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your attention.