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ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

WORLD INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

**UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF  
HER EXCELLENCY MRS. SUZANNE MUBARAK  
FIRST LADY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

**WIPO/APA/IPA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COPYRIGHT  
AND DEVELOPMENT: FROM CULTURAL DIVERSITY  
TO SOCIAL PROSPERITY**

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**OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING: A SOLUTION FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?\***

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\* The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) or its Member States.

## The Debate

Tension between

- short-term solutions and long term sustainability
- short-term economic expedience and epistimological concerns
- perpetual dependency & self-sufficiency
- Needs of deserving local users and the need for fair competition between local and international content providers

## Characteristics of the book sector in developing countries

- Relatively more developed state and donor supported school's textbook sector
- Non-existent or very underdeveloped and import dependent higher education sector with erratic availability of textbooks
- Non-existent or very underdeveloped professional and scholarly publishing sector
- Non-existent or very underdeveloped and import dependent general book sector

### ...characteristics continued

- Rampant illegal copying and piracy situation in part as a response to non-availability of critical content
- Generally inappropriate and unbalanced imported and free content
- Publishing generally a non-viable, ad hoc and seasonal profession

### Historical Account for the state of the Sector

- Primary education recognised as essential
- Secondary and tertiary historically regarded as unviable and lacking scale and scope-very low numbers could not sustain publishing
- Neo-colonial dependence on Western content at higher education level

### ...historical account continued

- Very little scope for professional and scholarly publishing sector
- Very little or no disposable income for the general book sector

### Recent Developments and Constraints

- The massive investment in primary education has created a swell at tertiary and higher education level
- Greater but unfulfilled demand for content at this level
- Unfulfilled greater demand for non-textbook content within education for libraries and general reading

### ...recent Developments (continued)

- Greater interrogation of world hegemony and need for the developing world to contribute to global dialogue meaningfully
- Woefully inadequate local capacity

### Some Critical Strategic Considerations & Objectives

- Every opportunity must be grabbed to build capacity of local publishing
- Create local and permanent publishing infrastructure and capacity
- Develop, exploit and protect local content
- Enrich global dialogue with greater contribution to information and knowledge by the developing world

## Is Open Access Publishing a Solution

- Short term provisioning of much needed content
- Short term solution to resource scarcity, ie money to buy content
- Significant democratisation of participation in knowledge production, especially at scholarly level

## ...open access publishing a solution? (continued)

- Greater platform and global participation for local scholars
- Excellent deposit site for non-commercial content and IPR for public good

## Limits to Open Access Publishing

- Delivery platform of open access publishing is less accessible, therefore unlikely to help the most needy
- Could create impression that all books should be free or cheap
- Seductive “solution” to developing world governments who are not spending enough on this key area already
- Will undermine the local industry’s status as a commercial sector and its potential contribution to economic development
- Will create two parallel quality criteria, one

## Limits .....(continued)

- Free content with commercial value will undermine the opportunity to grow local industry
- What is perceived in the developing world as non-viable and therefore “free” could be the bread basket of local publishers
- Will create a sense of “free content” and encourage copyright violations in an environment where this is already a problem

## Overcentralisation of Procurement

- One exclusive delivery platform likely to develop
- One textbook type scenario likely to develop
- Domination by state, funder and one publisher likely to develop
- Diversity and choice likely to be undermined

## Overcentralisation...(continued)

- Entrepreneurship and growth likely to be undermined
- Negative implications for freedom of expression
- Intellectual Property Rights Asset base likely to be eroded



## Alternative Model to Open Access

- Partnerships between developed world and developing world publishers with the following options:
  - Full co-publication
  - Co-production
  - Low price editions
  - Selling rights
  - free licensing

## The challenge for local publishers

Local publishers should avoid being perceived as opponents to open access and common good by being proactive in opening access to useful content that cannot be exploited commercially through:

...challenge for local publishers  
(continued)

- Use of common portals to deliver such content to the public, eg through local national associations
- Engaging users on how to access such content
- Engaging users and policy makers on the relationship between such free content and survival of the local industry

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