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Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (MVT)

Assembly

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REPORT ON THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

Information document prepared by the Secretariat

A. INTRODUCTION

1. This is the fourth annual *Report on the Accessible Books Consortium* prepared in the framework of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

2. The *Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled* (“the Marrakesh VIP Treaty”) was adopted on June 27, 2013, by the Member States of WIPO, and the Treaty came into force on September 30, 2016, after ratification or accession by 20 Member States. Practical initiatives are needed to realize the objectives set forth in the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) is one global initiative to implement the Treaty at an operational level.

3. ABC was launched on June 30, 2014, before the Member States of WIPO's Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights; it is a public-private alliance led by WIPO involving the following umbrella organizations:

- The DAISY Consortium;
- The International Authors Forum;
- The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment;
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions;
- The International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations;
- The International Publishers Association;
- Sightsavers; and
- The World Blind Union.

4. The ABC Secretariat is located at WIPO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and it is currently comprised of one full-time WIPO staff member, as well as individual and corporate contractors.

B. ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

ABC Global Book Service

5. The ABC Global Book Service ("the Service"), formerly known as TIGAR, is a global online catalogue of books in accessible formats that provides authorized entities (as defined in Article 2(c) of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty) that have joined the Service with the ability to search and make requests for accessible books. The Service's database of accessible titles is located on WIPO's servers. Through the Service, authorized entities can supplement their collections of accessible books from their counterparts in other countries free of charge.

6. This Service offers an automated system for the cross-border exchange of accessible books in two circumstances:

- where the two participating authorized entities exchanging books are located in countries that have adhered to and implemented the provisions of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. In such a case, the two participating authorized entities may exchange books through the Service without the authorization of the copyright owner;
- where one, or both, of the two participating authorized entities exchanging books are located in a country that has not implemented the provisions of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. In such a case, the two participating authorized entities may only exchange books through the Service once the ABC Secretariat has obtained authorization from the copyright owner.

7. The Service has a rights clearance procedure that removes the need for authorized entities to seek authorization from the copyright owner for the cross-border exchange of books. Clearance will be done centrally by the ABC Secretariat until such time as the Marrakesh VIP Treaty is adhered to and implemented in the jurisdictions of the participating authorized entities.

8. Currently, a total of 43 authorized entities have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the Service (see the list of 43 participating authorized entities in Annex I). As indicated in last year's report, ABC has been aiming to increase its Spanish language titles given that Latin America is a leader in terms of the number of countries joining the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. Four new authorized entities from Latin America joined the Service in 2018.

9. Usage of the Service has increased by 41 per cent during the previous 12 months. Since the launch of ABC, a cumulative total of 233,000 accessible format copies of titles downloaded from the Service were supplied to individual patrons through participating authorized entities.

10. Extensive work was undertaken to improve the Service in 2017 - 2018. These improvements include:

- (a) the release of the Service's interface, which was previously available in English, in both French and Spanish;
- (b) the incorporation of a "bulk-download" feature that allows authorized entities to download multiple titles from the Service simultaneously, rather than downloading one file at a time;
- (c) enhancements to improve the accessibility of the Service's interface, based on an audit conducted by an independent third party; and
- (d) the addition of an advanced-search function that provides authorized entities greater specificity in searching for titles in the ABC catalogue.

11. As highlighted in last year's report, participating authorized entities have stated that it would be useful to obtain their patrons' views of which books in the ABC catalogue they would like to read. Further design and development of a future consumer application is currently underway.

Future activities of the ABC Global Book Service

12. An important new development for the ABC Global Book Service is expected once the European Union (EU) formally becomes a party to the Marrakesh VIP Treaty and the Treaty is implemented in all EU member states. Over 270,000 titles will be available for cross-border exchange in the ABC Global Book Service at that time, without the need to obtain authorization from the copyright owners. Consequently, the ABC Secretariat anticipates a rise in demand in the number of new authorized entities that wish to join the Service, as well as an increased use of the Service by the current participating authorized entities.

13. With a view to addressing this scale-up in demand and usage, including recruiting new authorized entities and incorporating their catalogues into the service, WIPO issued a *Call for Expressions of Interest* to companies or organizations that can provide library services to the Service. Catalogue integration is a very time-consuming and specialized process, due to the varying languages and format of the metadata provided by participating authorized entities. The procurement process to identify such a supplier is ongoing.

Capacity Building

14. ABC provides training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques to authorized entities, departments of education and publishers in developing and least developed countries (LDCs). Training and technical assistance is provided in the following accessible formats: EPUB3, DAISY and Braille (both electronic and embossed paper). Funding for the production of educational materials in national languages to be used by primary, secondary and university students who are print disabled is also provided, so that the techniques taught during the training can be utilized immediately by the trainees.

15. ABC capacity building activities continued in Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uruguay and new projects were established in Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Mexico, Mongolia and Viet Nam. Projects in India were funded by the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Foundation and the Skoll Foundation.

16. A total of over 8,000 accessible educational titles will have been produced by May 2019 through ABC's capacity building projects over five years in these twelve countries, with more than half of the budget provided by a generous contribution from the Government of Australia.

Future activities for Capacity Building

17. Given the ever increasing demand from authorized entities, publishers and government agencies for capacity building, ABC plans to continue to expand and establish projects with partners in developing countries and LDCs, with the objective of providing training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques. Attaining this objective will depend on continued funding by donors and the identification of strong local champions who can implement ABC projects at the local level.

Accessible Publishing

18. ABC promotes the production of "born accessible" works by publishers, that is, books that are usable from the start by both sighted persons and the print disabled. In particular, ABC encourages all publishers to:

- use the accessibility features of the EPUB3 standard for production of digital publications; and
- include descriptions of the accessibility features of their products in the information they provide to retailers and others in the book supply chain.

19. ABC again organized the *ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing* and the winners of the 2018 award were Hachette Livre, France in the publisher category, and the DAISY Forum of India in the initiative category. A record number of award nominations was received by ABC this year, coming from 11 different countries and representing four continents, making this a truly international award. The awards were presented at the London Book Fair in April 2018 to recognize these organizations for having provided outstanding leadership and achievements in the advancement of the accessibility of digital publications to persons with print disabilities.

20. Hachette Livre, France was commended by the selection jury for its implementation of "born accessible" production processes in the EPUB3 format and for its implementation of mandatory accessibility conformance testing for all of its trade publications. When its accessibility features are used correctly, EPUB3 is the gold standard in the publishing industry for the production of accessible digital books.

21. The DAISY Forum of India, a network of over 100 organizations, was recognized for its work on behalf of people who are print disabled. The selection jury recognized the DAISY Forum of India for its launch of *Sugamya Pustakalaya*, India's largest collection of online accessible books, which for the first time created a centralized repository of all accessible books available in the country.

22. In addition to its annual award, ABC also promotes and encourages publishers to sign its *Charter for Accessible Publishing*, which contains eight high-level aspirational principles relating to digital publications in accessible formats. The latest signatories to the ABC Charter are *Santillana Mexico* and *Manual Moderno*, both publishers from Mexico.

23. WIPO provided training to its Editorial and Design Section on how to produce accessible digital publications, as well as training for approximately 40 WIPO staff in the production of accessible Word and PDF documents generated within the context of the Assemblies of WIPO Member States.

Future Activities for Inclusive Publishing

24. As stated in last year's report, WIPO issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2017 for the services of experts to provide training and technical assistance in accessible book production in a number of languages. Three companies were identified and retained under a framework agreement. The ABC Secretariat will convene a working group to discuss standardizing training in accessible book production with the three selected companies. The ABC Secretariat will invite experts with practical experience in accessible publishing to join this working group; its mandate will be to discuss the proposed ABC training curriculum.

25. Together with the International Publishers Association, ABC will endeavour to increase the number of signatories to the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*. By becoming a signatory to the *ABC Charter*, publishers signal their intention to make their publications accessible to readers who are print disabled.

Fundraising

26. As reported last year, WIPO issued a RFP in 2017 for the services of an expert fundraising company to assist with researching and submitting grant proposals for ABC projects to private sector sources such as charitable foundations and corporate giving programs. This procurement process did not result in the identification of a contractor; consequently, development and implementation of a comprehensive fundraising strategy has been suspended until such time as the requisite entities can be engaged.

27. WIPO continues to welcome Funds-in-Trust for ABC capacity building projects.

[Annexes follow]

List of Authorized Entities (AEs) that have joined the ABC Global Book Service

New AEs that joined in 2018 are preceded by an asterisk*

1. *Argentina: Tiflonexos
2. Australia: Visability
3. Australia: Vision Australia
4. Bangladesh: Young Power in Social Action
5. *Belgium: Flemish Library for Audiobooks and Braille (*Luisterpuntbibliotheek*)
6. Brazil: Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind
7. *Burkina Faso: *Union Nationale Des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants*
8. *Canada: *Bibliothèque et Archives Nationale du Québec*
9. Canada: Canadian National Institute for the Blind
10. *Colombia: *Instituto Nacional para Ciegos*
11. Denmark: Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities (Nota)
12. Finland: Celia
13. France: *Association Valentin Haüy*
14. *France: *Groupement des Intellectuels Aveugles ou Amblyopes*
15. *Germany: German Central Library for the Blind (DZB)
16. Iceland: Icelandic Talking Book Library (HBS)
17. *India: DAISY Forum of India
18. Ireland: National Council for the Blind of Ireland
19. Israel: Central Library for Blind and Reading Impaired People
20. *Mexico: *Discapacitados Visuales*
21. *Mongolia: The Braille And Digital Library for Blind, Metropolitan Library of Ulaanbaatar
22. Nepal: Action on Disability Rights and Development
23. *Netherlands: *Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen*
24. Netherlands: Dedicon
25. New Zealand: Blind Foundation
26. Norway: Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille
27. Poland: Central Library of Labour and Social Security
28. Portugal: National Library of Portugal
29. Republic of Korea: National Library for the Disabled
30. *Russian Federation: St. Petersburg Library for Blind and Visually Impaired
31. South Africa: South African Library for the Blind
32. *Sri Lanka: DAISY Lanka Foundation

33. Sweden: Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM)
34. Switzerland: *Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants*
35. Switzerland: *Bibliothèque Sonore Romande*
36. Switzerland: Swiss Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Print Disabled
37. *Thailand: National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, TAB Foundation
38. *Tunisia: National Library
39. United Kingdom: Seeing Ear
40. *United States of America: California State Library
41. United States of America: National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
42. *Uruguay: *Fundación Braille de Uruguay*
43. *Viet Nam: Sao Mai Vocational and Assistive Technology Center for the Blind

[Annex II follows]

ABC Statistics 2017-2018

ABC Global Book Service Indicators	By January 2014	By August 2017 (cumulative)	By August 2018 (cumulative)	Increase since 2017
No. of authorized entities (AEs) participating in the ABC Global Book Service	11	25	43	72%
No. of downloaded titles by participating AEs	200	9,500	13,000	37%
No. of titles where rights were obtained from the copyright owner for cross-border exchange	1270	21,700	26,100	20%
No. of accessible format copies of ABC titles supplied to print disabled individuals through participating AEs	16,000 (by Dec 2014)	165,000	233,000	41%
Capacity Building Indicators				
No. of educational titles produced in national languages in accessible formats through ABC training and technical assistance	N/A	2,500	5,000	100%

[End of Annex II and of document]