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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

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the fifth 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 celebrated its fifth anniversary this year. It 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 partnership led by WIPO and includes 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, three fellows, as well as individual and corporate contractors.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCESSIBLE BOOKS CONSORTIUM

ABC GLOBAL BOOK SERVICE

5. The ABC Global Book Service ("the Service") is a global online catalogue of books in accessible formats that provides participating authorized entities (AEs), as defined in Article 2(c) of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty, with the ability to search, order and exchange accessible books across borders.

6. The cross-border exchange of accessible books may take place in the following two circumstances:

- where the two participating AEs 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 AEs may exchange books through the Service without the authorization of the copyright owner; or
- where one, or both, of the two participating AEs 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 AEs may only exchange books through the Service once the ABC Secretariat has obtained authorization from the copyright owner.

7. The Service has achieved some important milestones during its fifth year:

- over 540,000 titles are now integrated in the ABC catalogue, up from 365,600 titles 12 months ago. This increase came from the incorporation of the catalogues from AEs located in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, India, Israel, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay and Viet Nam;
- a total of 61 authorized entities have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the Service (see the list of 61 participating authorized entities in Annex I), with 22 AEs from developing or least developed countries (LDCs). The ABC Secretariat is currently in discussion with an additional 50 prospective AEs to join the Service;
- the number of titles available for cross-border exchange under the Marrakesh VIP Treaty provisions has vastly expanded this past year, with over 425,000 titles now available for transfer without the need to request authorization from the copyright

owner. This increase was primarily due to the implementation of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty provisions in the European Union.

8. The ABC Global Book Service consumer application (Business-to-Business-to-Consumer or B2B2C) was deployed in the first quarter of 2019. This consumer application was rolled-out to the AEs located in countries that have adhered to, and implemented, the provisions of the Marrakesh VIP Treaty. The consumer application is not publicly open and searchable, meaning that AE patrons require a login. The AEs in eligible countries are responsible for creating accounts to enable their patrons to search the ABC catalogue directly and request accessible books through the consumer application. Delivery of digital files to beneficiary persons is handled by the AE through the AE's existing distribution system.

9. As reported last year, WIPO issued a *Call for Expressions of Interest* in 2018 to companies or organizations that could potentially provide library services to the ABC Secretariat. This procurement process did not result in the identification of a contractor. As an alternative, WIPO established an ABC fellowship program to assist with the Service, as well as other ABC activities.

Future ABC Global Book Service Activities

10. As national Marrakesh Treaty implementing legislation become more widespread, we anticipate a substantial increase in cross-border exchanges. The ABC Secretariat is developing an automated solution to facilitate the process of uploading the digital files or titles requested through the Service. Currently, only the titles are included in the ABC catalogue and not the actual digital files. Once a title is ordered, the Service is dependent on human intervention from the producing AE to upload the requested digital file. Automating the upload process will allow AEs to save time and resources, allowing the Service to run without constant human intervention. In turn, beneficiary persons of all participating AEs should see improvements in the delivery times for receiving the digital files. A staged approach for implementation of the automated upload solution is planned, beginning with a limited number of AEs with the necessary technical infrastructure.

11. Additionally, WIPO and its partners are interested in building an extensive network of catalogues of accessible books, to allow for the search, discovery and exchange of the largest number of titles in accessible formats in the widest possible range of languages. Such a federated search capacity across a network of catalogues, made possible by an Application Program Interface (API), would assist AEs and people who are print-disabled, by reducing the number of platforms that they have to search for accessible titles.

CAPACITY BUILDING

12. ABC provides training and technical assistance in the latest accessible book production techniques to authorized entities, departments of education and publishers in developing countries and LDCs. Training and technical assistance are 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 provided by ABC, so that the techniques taught during the training can be utilized immediately by the trainees. Capacity building activities have taken place in the following 13 countries this year: Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

13. Funds-in-Trust (FIT) have funded the following projects:

- FIT Australia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Viet Nam;

- FIT Republic of Korea: Argentina, Botswana and Nigeria; and
- FIT United Arab Emirates: Tunisia.

WIPO continues to welcome FIT for ABC capacity building projects.

14. To date, the necessary national capacity has been developed in 17 countries, and 9,300 accessible educational titles have been produced in five years through ABC's projects.

Future Capacity Building Activities

15. As mentioned in previous reports, ABC plans to continue to expand and establish projects with new 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

16. 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, all publishers are encouraged to:

- use the accessibility features of the EPUB3 standard for the 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.

17. Publishers and publisher associations around the world are invited to sign the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*, which contains eight high-level aspirational principles relating to digital publications in accessible formats. The past 12 months have seen a great increase in the number of adherents to the Charter, which has a total of 100 signatories to date.

18. ABC again organized the *ABC International Excellence Award for Accessible Publishing* and the winners of the 2019 award were Editorial 5 (ED5), from Brazil, in the publisher category, and eKitabu, from Kenya, in the initiative category. The awards were presented at the London Book Fair in March 2019 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. Award nominations were received from 13 countries, with seven coming from developing countries, strengthening the image of the annual awards as being truly international.

19. As stated in last year's report, the ABC Secretariat convened a working group to discuss standardizing training in accessible book production with its expert trainers and representatives from publishers. The group established draft syllabi for publisher and AE trainings. It was agreed to extend the mandate of the group so that there would be an informal forum for discussions on a quarterly basis on topics related to accessible publishing.

Future Accessible Publishing Activities

20. Together with the International Publishers Association, ABC will continue to promote and expand the number of signatories to the *ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing*. The global communications strategy for the Charter is led by ABC's rightholder partners.

[Annexes follow]

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

New AEs that joined since June 2018 are preceded by an asterisk*

1. Argentina: *Tiflonexos*
2. Australia: Visability
3. Australia: Vision Australia
4. *Austria: *Hoerbuecherei*
5. Bangladesh: Young Power in Social Action
6. *Belgium: EQLA (previously known as *l'Œuvre Nationale des Aveugles*)
7. Belgium: Flemish Library for Audiobooks and Braille (*Luisterpuntbibliotheek*)
8. Brazil: Dorina Nowill Foundation for the Blind
9. Burkina Faso: *Union Nationale Des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants*
10. *Canada: BC Libraries Cooperative 2009
11. Canada: *Bibliothèque et Archives Nationale du Québec*
12. Canada: Canadian National Institute for the Blind
13. *Canada: Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA)
14. *Chile: *Bibliociegos*
15. Colombia: *Instituto Nacional para Ciegos (INCI)*
16. *Croatia: Croatian Library for the Blind
17. Denmark: Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities (Nota)
18. *Egypt: *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*
19. Finland: Celia
20. France: *Association Valentin Haüy*
21. *France: Brailenet
22. *France: *Groupement des Intellectuels Aveugles ou Amblyopes*
23. Germany: German Central Library for the Blind (DZB)
24. Iceland: Icelandic Talking Book Library (HBS)
25. India: DAISY Forum of India
26. Ireland: National Council for the Blind of Ireland
27. Israel: Central Library for Blind and Reading Impaired People
28. *Japan: National Diet Library (NDL)
29. *Japan: National Association of Institutions of Information Service for Visually Impaired Persons (NAIIV)
30. *Malawi: University of Malawi, Chancellor College
31. *Malaysia: St. Nicholas' Home

32. Mexico: *Discapitados Visuales*
33. Mongolia: The Braille And Digital Library for Blind, Metropolitan Library of Ulaanbaatar
34. Nepal: Action on Disability Rights and Development
35. *Netherlands: *Bibliotheekservice Passend Lezen*
36. Netherlands: Dedicon
37. New Zealand: Blind Foundation
38. Norway: Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille
39. Poland: Central Library of Labour and Social Security
40. Portugal: National Library of Portugal
41. *Qatar: Qatar National Library
42. Republic of Korea: National Library for the Disabled
43. *Russian Federation: Russian State Library for the Blind
44. *Russian Federation: St. Petersburg Library for Blind and Visually Impaired
45. *Sierra Leone: Educational Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired
46. South Africa: South African Library for the Blind
47. Sri Lanka: DAISY Lanka Foundation
48. Sweden: Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM)
49. *Switzerland: *Associazione ciechi e ipovedenti della Svizzera italiana (UNITAS)*
50. Switzerland: *Association pour le Bien des Aveugles et malvoyants*
51. Switzerland: *Bibliothèque Sonore Romande*
52. Switzerland: Swiss Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Print Disabled
53. *Thailand: National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, TAB Foundation
54. *Tunisia: National Library
55. *Uganda: Uganda National Association of the Blind
56. United Kingdom: Seeing Ear
57. *United States of America: California State Library (CSL)
58. United States of America: National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)
59. *United States of America: American Printing House for the Blind (APH)
60. Uruguay: *Fundación Braille de Uruguay*
61. Viet Nam: Sao Mai Vocational and Assistive Technology Center for the Blind

[Annex II follows]

ABC Statistics 2018-2019

ABC Global Book Service Indicators	Jan 2014	September 2018 All numbers are cumulative	September 2019 All numbers are cumulative	Increase since September 2018
No. of authorized entities (AEs) that have signed an agreement with WIPO to participate in the ABC Global Book Service	11	43	61	42%
No. of titles in the ABC Global Book Service catalogue	224,500	365,600	540,000	48%
No. of titles available for cross border exchange under the Marrakesh VIP Treaty provisions, i.e., without the need to request authorization from the copyright owner (integrated catalogues in ABC)	N/A	35,800	425,000	1087%
No. of downloaded titles by participating AEs	200	13,000	22,300	72%
No. of titles where rights were obtained from the copyright owner for cross-border exchange	1,270	26,100	28,500	9%
No. of loans of ABC titles to print disabled individuals through participating AEs	16,000 (Dec 2014)	233,000 loans as of August 31, 2018	293,000 loans as of August 31, 2019	26%
No. of educational titles that were produced in national languages in accessible formats through training and technical assistance provided by ABC	N/A	5,000 educational titles	9,300	86%

Inclusive Publishing Indicators	Jan 2014	September 2018 All numbers are cumulative	September 2019 All numbers are cumulative	Increase since September 2018
No. of signatories – ABC Charter for Accessible Publishing	N/A	16	100	525%

[End of Annex II and of document]