



The Honourable Dr. Fred O. Matiang'i, PhD, EGH  
The Cabinet Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, Republic of Kenya  
Nairobi  
Kenya  
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25 May 2016

Dear Sir,

**Re: VAT on books**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global federation of national publishers associations, representing all aspects of worldwide book and journal publishing. Established in 1896, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness of publishing as a force for economic, cultural and political development. Worldwide, the IPA promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish, and fights against censorship. We have 60 members from more than 50 countries.

The Kenya Publishers Association is an IPA member, and I am writing in support of the KPA's positions regarding VAT on books as set out in their recent discussions with the National Treasury, the Kenya Revenue Authority, the Parliamentary Budget Committee and other government departments.

The IPA has consistently advocated a shift to a zero rate of VAT on all books because evidence shows that the medium- and long-term social, cultural and economic advantages of doing so are significant.

A zero VAT rate is an effective and even-handed way to support reading, education and a thriving knowledge economy. Many government policies that support writing or reading require bias — favouring certain works over others, but lowering VAT rates supports all writing and all reading.

Books are the engines of knowledge acquisition and transfer, and the digital economies of the future depend on their thriving. However, the circulation of books is acutely price-sensitive and especially vulnerable to the imposition of VAT. Taxing books restricts their circulation, drives down legitimate sales and fuels piracy, which is of major concern to countries trying to bridge a knowledge deficit.

We remain at your Government's disposal for more detailed information about our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Borghino', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

José Borghino, Secretary General

Cc: Permanent Secretary [ps@education.go.ke](mailto:ps@education.go.ke); Policy Advisor to Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Jane Munga [jmunga@gmail.com](mailto:jmunga@gmail.com)