



Luís Jorge Manuel António Ferrão
Mozambican Minister of Education and Human Development

14 September 2016

Dear Minister Ferrão,

The International Publishers Association's Educational Publishers Forum represents the major educational publishers associations around the world, and strongly believes that the best performing education systems encourage educational publishers to compete in an open market, producing innovative solutions that meet local needs.

Over the course of the last decade, members of ours that operate in the Mozambican market have made important investments in developing new secondary textbooks, on the assumption that a competitive market would be in place for the medium to long term. Such an assumption is the only way to secure a return on those investments, given the low number of students in grades eight to twelve and the low incomes of the majority of families with children at public secondary schools.

Besides the positive impact of these publishers' investments on the number of textbooks available, it has also created a number of new publishers, authors and jobs in the publishing industry that did not exist beforehand. In addition, there was also a comprehensive transfer of knowledge and skills about the publishing business to Mozambique.

We recently learned of a change of secondary school textbook policy in Mozambique, specifically, the decision to 'close' the open market from 2017 for at least five years through the 'one book per year per subject' policy. We understand that publishers were involved in this process, expressing their concerns over this model on several occasions. Unfortunately, however, they were not taken into consideration and publishers have effectively been forced to participate in a price competition with no guarantee of centralized book purchasing by the Mozambican state, which is far from normal.

We believe that, if implemented, this model is a recipe for a sharp drop in the quality and range of available educational resources in Mozambique, since publishers will stop investing in the local market. We are certain that this measure will endanger the small publishers, the investment on the creation of books will stutter, and it will have a multiplying negative economic impact in terms of direct and indirect jobs (authors, illustrators, photographers, editors, reviewers, salesforce, consultants, and marketers), ad spending and the printing industry.

In our opinion, most of the negative impacts of this measure have been overlooked for the purpose of having cheaper books, but we firmly believe that it is possible to find solutions that guarantee low prices, yet maintain the diversity and competitiveness of an open publishing market, which is very important for the development of any country.

We are confident that it is not too late to adjust this decision, which will do irreparable harm to the country in the long run.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large loop on the left and a series of smaller loops and a long horizontal stroke on the right.

José Borghino
Secretary General