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I'm thrilled to be in Moscow to address Russian and international publishing stakeholders, and fellow lovers of the written word.

I've been to Russia several times in my work with Elsevier, but this is my first visit as President of the International Publishers Association – the IPA – and the first time I've had the honour of opening **Moscow International Book Fair**.

I'm very flattered to be invited to do so this year, as the Fair – Russia's oldest book industry forum – celebrates its 30th edition.

Like most visitors to Moscow, I'm awed by the **depth** of Russian culture and history, both of which are immortalized by the immense canon of literature for which Russia is so admired.

The list is enormous, from the mighty classics of **Pushkin, Tolstoy** and **Dostoyevsky** to the modern yet just as potent output of **Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn** and **Nabokov**.

And that's before we even start on the music, the opera and the ballet....

I'm also always struck by a sense of this country's **international influence** and **impact** on the world stage.

For instance, Russia's clear driving role in the Commonwealth of Independent States is well known, and is reflected in the enthusiastic CIS participation at this book fair.

Russia is an old nation that has undergone great changes but never lost sight of its identity – and this is a quality that **the IPA shares**.

The IPA was founded in 1896 by the largest publishing houses of the time, to promote and protect publishing worldwide, and to act as a watchdog of **copyright** and **freedom to publish**. Today it is still pursuing the same important mission.

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, it is the collective voice of more than **70 associations** from **60 countries** on all aspects of book and journal publishing. Its membership represents many thousands of publishing companies worldwide that, in total, serve **5.6 billion people**.

It's this immense weight that opens the doors to key global fora, such as the **United Nations**, because the IPA speaks for the majority of publishers in the majority of markets. This includes Russia, where the Russian Publishers Association (ASKI) is a valued member.

So what does the IPA actually do? In short, it is an alliance of national, regional and international publishers associations with a clear purpose: to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness of it as a force for economic, cultural and political development.

Underpinning the IPA's mission are the pillars of **copyright** and **freedom to publish** – both indispensable principles that are facing unprecedented challenges today.

In the **copyright** arena, the IPA's international lobbying focus is on the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** in Geneva. The IPA is the first line of defence in the supranational IP treaty process, advancing the interests of publishers and the IP industries at WIPO's most important decision-making fora.

WIPO is the key battleground where the competing interests of copyright holders and opponents of copyright are fought out.

Combat metaphors may be crude, but they are nonetheless applicable. The international copyright frameworks that safeguard creativity have never been under a more **determined, sustained, and well-funded attack**.

Powerful technology companies are bankrolling and waging a strategic campaign to **weaken copyright worldwide** by, among other things, evangelizing for increased

'Fair Use' exceptions. It is no accident that, in recent years, a succession of countries has launched copyright law reviews that include expanded fair use provisions.

The IPA is meeting this challenge head-on, weighing in to these national processes and flagging the potential **long-term damage** to **creativity, literacy, education** and **employment** done by undermining copyright.

We continue to work with our members and partners to ensure decision-makers are in possession of **facts** when they consider legal changes whose effects may be major, wide-reaching and long term.

One such effect is the impairment of publishers and authors from making a proper return on their creativity, be it through inadequate copyright laws, or through deliberate violations and piracy.

And at this point I'd like to applaud the **resolute steps being taken in Russia** to tackle the **book piracy epidemic**. According to the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, between 25 and 30 percent of Russia's overall book market is **counterfeit** – including **schoolbooks**.

Inferior quality counterfeit books in classrooms mean pupils get an **inferior quality education**. Not only that, but counterfeiting and piracy mean publishers do not benefit from the return on their investments, which curtails their ability to take risks and innovate, and to better prepare Russian children for the **knowledge economies** of the future.

We're encouraged that the State is starting to take the matter seriously, and mounting a legal response. As a side note, some of the problem may be addressed by the removal of the **high 18% VAT levy** currently imposed on e-books in Russia, which would bring them into line with the zero rate applied to print books. **After all, a book is a book whatever its format.**

But we can be certain that without consistently applied proactive countermeasures and communications campaigns to sensitize a Russian population that's largely unconcerned about this crime – then the problem will get steadily worse.

Piracy comes in many forms, some of which may even lend it a veneer of acceptability. In the science domain, **Sci-Hub** is a source of global concern, and one that I'm sure publishers and governments everywhere want to address together.

Such platforms **undermine** the science publishing ecosystem that researchers and universities worldwide rely on for **communication, validation** and **quality** assurance.

Sci-Hub's voluntary withdrawal from Russia this week was welcomed by many in the scientific publishing community, but **further proactive action** is needed to properly address the problem.

Now, as I mentioned, the second pillar of the IPA is the **freedom to publish**. Violations of this right around the world are commonplace, with daily reports of writers and publishers coming under pressure.

It is the IPA's duty to challenge censorship wherever it occurs – as we did recently in China, when Beijing asked for the removal of a selection of online academic publications by **Cambridge University Press**. At first CUP felt it had no choice but to comply, but then it reinstated the articles, which we believe was **the right thing** to do.

The IPA criticized the Chinese authorities for attempting to impose academic censorship, and undermine **freedom to publish** and **academic freedom**, which are essential for the advancement of the science. We wait to see what Beijing will do next.

Another example is in Russia, where the IPA has been debating the problematic anti-gay propaganda law, which is compelling publishers to censor texts to avoid criminal liability. The law poses many questions beyond the immediate issue it seeks to address – questions about freedom of expression, commercial sensitivities, the sacred bond of trust between authors and publishers.

We believe this law needs to be reviewed, because its good intentions to protect minors may in reality be doing more harm than good.

Ladies and gentlemen, Russia is a vast country that prizes books and reading. Russian publishing, built on time-honoured values of **education, reading, culture**

and **literature**, has the potential to make great strides in the coming years – with the right frameworks in place.

The IPA will continue to play its part in the realization of that potential through our work on copyright and piracy, and by continuing to monitor the extent to which publishers and writers can pursue their profession freely.

We look to the Russian Publishers Association, under the clear-sighted direction of **President Konstantin Chechenev** and **Secretary General Oleg Filimonov**, for their continued support in these areas, where our joint efforts and combined voices have a greater chance of success.

Thank you.