

**Why is the work of the International Publishers Association
important for the support and development of publishing industry
in Lebanon?**

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Mr Abdel Moneim Ariss, Mayor of Beirut,
Dr.Omar Halablab, General manager of the ministry of culture,
Mrs Samira Assi, President of the Syndicate of Publishers' Union in Lebanon,
Mr. Mohammed Irani, President Academia International and former president of
the Syndicate,
Fellow publishers and friends of books,,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Thanks and Congratulations

May I first of all thank you for the invitation to come to Beirut to speak to you
today in relation to the celebrations of Beirut World Book Capital City
2009/2010.

As IPA-President I see my visit here as a great opportunity for the International
Publishers Association: Firstly to celebrate Beirut as World Book Capital City
and to learn about your programme. Secondly to strengthen our relationship with
the Syndicate of Publishers' Union in Lebanon. And thirdly to meet with you
and speak with the Lebanese publishers directly to find out how we can support
you and how you can support us.

2. IPA and the World Book Capital City

As many of you may know, IPA took an initiative many years ago, and together with UNESCO, we 'created' World Book and Copyright Day which we celebrate on the 23rd of April. Around the world publishers associations, libraries and booksellers are making use of this day to promote books and reading and to raise awareness among the general public and the policy makers for our issues.

Following the success of this day, IPA then lobbied for the creation of a World Book Capital City. Following a first trial with Madrid our president in that time was Pere Vicens from Spain UNESCO formally adopted a resolution instituting the World Book Capital title in 2001.

From the outset IPA has been one of the three organisations that form the central committee that manages the title and the selection of candidates. We are delighted to be part of this process because we have seen that this title actually has made a difference in many cities and countries where it has been awarded. The success has been based on four factors:

Firstly the title enables the book community to find extra financial resources, both from private sponsors or from government. Extra money for books and reading is in itself a good thing, but that is just the beginning.

Secondly the extra money is used not only to promote books and reading. It actually brings the different stakeholders closer together: the authors, publishers, libraries and booksellers. Rather than fighting against each other, the stakeholders learn that they have much more in common than what sets them apart. They work on joint projects and therefore learn themselves to see each other as part of a family, rather than opposites in business.

Thirdly the World Book Capital City does raise the issue of books and reading. The book industry remains the largest content industry, but it is often eclipsed by the glamour of film or the noise of the music industry. Both industries are more centralised with fewer, more visible companies. Movie- and music stars populate our gossip magazines and it is hard to find an author in those pages at all. As an industry we need this kind of platform to become more visible. Finally our experience has shown that the World Book Capital City can make a difference in the reading culture of a city. In many cities such as Amsterdam, Bogota or Montreal some of the initiatives started during this year as an experiment, have continued, simply because they were enthusiastically embraced by the public.

3. Why IPA supported the candidacy of Beirut

On July 3, 2007, the Selection Committee of UNESCO, which members are delegates of the International Publishers Association (IPA), International Booksellers Federation (IBF), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and a delegate from UNESCO, officially named Beirut as the World Book Capital - 2009.

This was not an easy decision. Wasn't piracy still rampant in Lebanon? Would this city ravaged yet again by political turmoil be able to organise such an event? Whilst the deliberations and internal discussions of the Committee are kept confidential you know the outcome: "*the city of Beirut has in particular been chosen for its implication regarding the cultural diversity, the dialogue and tolerance*".

This award was intended to be a vote of confidence in Beirut and a signal that even in times of tension life must continue.

And then the last important reason of course: "*the variety and the dynamic character of its program*". And now we are delighted that since then, Beirut has been able to develop peacefully and that Beirut World Book Capital is turning

out to be a success. With more than 400 projects and 600 activities, all encouraging reading or supporting the publishing industry.

4. IPA and Publishing in the Arab World

IPA was founded in 1896 in France. While always international, there has been a natural focus of its activities first in Europe and then in the industrialised countries. Only in recent years IPA has moved from simply protecting existing industries towards developing local publishing industries in less developed regions. Today, the Arab Publishers Association is an associate member of IPA, Egypt, Sudan and Lebanon are full members of IPA and the publishers association of the Emirates and Saudi Arabia are associate members.

IPA's senior vice president Ibrahim El Mouallem is from Egypt and we are holding our 7th international copyright symposium in the United Arab Emirates.

Still it is a sad fact that, according to our estimates, only 3% of the worlds publishing output comes from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The entire output of publishing in the Arab world is less than 2%.

Why is this the case if publishing can be successful in Singapore and Kenia, in Korea and Norway, in India and Iceland? If publishing can be successful anywhere in the world, why is the Arab publishing industry lagging behind its full potential. How can that be changed? An answer may be given if you look at what is at the policy areas that are at the heart of publishing and at the heart of IPA's mission.

5. IPA's mission

But IPA does more than elect and manage the World Book Capital Cities. IPA's mission is -to uphold and defend the right of publishers to publish and distribute the works of the mind in complete freedom, -to promote and protect the principles of copyright and to defend copyright against all infringements which may restrict the rights of authors and publishers, -to overcome illiteracy, the lack of books and of other educational materials and -to promote and represent publishing as a cultural sector and a creative industry.

6. Importance of publishing for the economy

The work of IPA is especially important, because of the economic value of publishing is very important indeed. According to the 2009 PWC study on New Media, in terms of overall revenue, book, professional and business information publishing in 2008 is bigger than the Internet, bigger than newspapers and magazine publishing, and bigger than film, music , radio and the entertainment software industry combined...

Projections for 2013 show that we will be losing 3 percentage points, some 17% of our revenues to the Internet. I see this not as a threat but as an opportunity, because the publishing industry is actively pursuing digital publishing experiments and developing internet-publishing business models.

7. Copyright

Historically the defence of copyright has been our central concern. Unlike most areas of legislation national copyright laws are heavily influenced by international treaties. Some 25 treaties are administered by the UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) including the Berne Convention and the WIPO Copyright Treaties. They are the basis for international copyright protection today.

These treaties are not static. They are constantly re-evaluated and possible changes are debated. At the moment the WIPO is discussing whether they should create a new treaty that would create uniform copyright exceptions around the world. Such a treaty is a significant threat to publishers, in particular if the “copy-left” activists have their way and create broad exceptions for education and libraries.

IPA is based in Geneva because it needs to be close to WIPO to represent publisher interests. In doing so, IPA represents the interest of all publishers, whether based in the US or in Sudan, in Japan or in Lebanon. We are your international lobbying organisation.

Other international organisations that also seek to influence copyright laws or try to shape international and national publishing policies are the World Trade Organisation (WTO), UNESCO, UNCTAD, International Telecommunications Union, OECD, the World Bank, and countless others. The Internet, open access and social networks are trends that UN organisations have also picked up on. Each one now wants to play a role, often without understanding the implications for publishing and the impact on the availability of content.

8. Freedom to Publish

IPA promotes and protects freedom to publish. Freedom to publish has two elements: freedom of expression and freedom of enterprise.

Freedom of expression is not something I need to tell you about. Lebanon has great freedom of expression. You understand very well the importance of open political debate, of tolerance for different views and the importance of the freedom of author and publisher to follow their own conscience in what they write and publish. The freedom that publishers have experienced in Lebanon has contributed to the success of publishing here.

The anniversary of the death of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri two days ago is a stark reminder in Lebanon, that freedom is not a given, but freedom must be fought for, by peaceful means, with dedication and at times with lives put at risk. It is in this spirit that we also commemorate the Lebanese publisher Gebran Ghassan Tueni who died in 2005 and whose name now graces a regional prize by the World Association of Newspapers.(our sister organization) and Samir Kassir.

IPA awards an international freedom to publish prize once a year to those that have shown exemplary courage in defending freedom of expression and freedom to publish. Last year the prize was awarded in Oslo to three Tunisian activists who created the first grassroots NGO to defend freedom of expression in Tunisia.

It would be lovely if one year the prize could be hosted by the Syndicate of Publishers' Union in Lebanon, or if we would receive proposals for possible future awards. I am sure there are examples of courageous publishers in Lebanon who take personal risks because they publish those voices that they believe must be heard.

9. Freedom of Enterprise

Freedom of expression needs as its sister-right *freedom of enterprise*. There is no freedom of the press without a commercially viable press. Equally publishers need to compete as independent entrepreneurs.

State publishing is therefore one of the great threats to publishing and to freedom to publish. In particular in educational publishing many governments

believe that they should be publishing the books, or at least that they should decide on the books that are used to teach in every classroom on the same topic.

Such policies that promote state publishing or single adoption are misleading in many ways: firstly in most cases state publishing produces low quality at high costs. Government publishers seldom innovate. They certainly do not take risks. They have no time to select and train skilled writers. They operate by committee and consensus. All these problems are not resolved by creating public tenders of single books for national adoption. The greatest asset of a decentralised private educational publishing industry is the diversity that competition creates.

Publishers take risks and innovate. Not seldom such innovations fail. But sometimes they actually become a success and raise the standard of educational material for everybody. Competing publishers will seek to identify niches.

Maybe boys and girls want different kinds of reading material? Maybe some children and teachers prefer one pedagogical method to another? Education is not a monolithic block, it is a concept with numerous methodologies, approaches, learning targets and routes. Allowing government to decide how everybody has to learn lowers the children's ability to maximise their potential.

Private, competing, educational publishers provide a great service to society and governments must give them space to do so. IPA has published a policy paper on effective educational textbook policy that has been welcomed and used by many national publishers associations to lobby their government towards better educational publisher involvement.

10. Other IPA Issues

There are many other issues where IPA is active. We fight for lower VAT rates and the abolition of duties on the import of books or of paper and other things needed for book production.

At an international level IPA is involved in standards bodies such as the International DOI Foundation, EDItEUR or the International ISBN Agency. IPA does not operate the standards bodies, but helps to ensure that the international standards meet the requirements of publishers around the world.

The publishing industry is unique in the number of different articles that it sells. No supermarket would stock an item of which it can only sell five items per month. Bookshops regularly do. Around 100,000 books are published every year in countries like the UK, the US and Germany. Successful publishing industries depend on the ability to sell not just bestsellers, but also the famous “long tail”. In publishing the “long tail” begins quickly and is, indeed, very long. Publishing therefore needs efficient distribution networks. Such a network needs two fundamental elements: firstly reliable, well managed bibliographic database that ensures that people can easily discover what has been published and where it can be obtained. Secondly an efficient distribution infrastructure must be available that enables secure payment and delivery of the books, nationally, but also across borders.

11. Digital Issues

Of course I cannot speak without mentioning digital issues. Around the world the Internet and digital technologies are creating new threats and opportunities. Publishers aren't printers. We do not care whether the books we sell are in paper formats or in digital format. Digital formats have many advantages. They may solve the distribution problem that the Arab world faces and re enforces the need of accurate and comprehensive digital bibliographic databases.

Some publishers turn for advice to IPA on how to act in the digital environment. What business model should they use? Which platform should they chose? It is

not IPA's role to give business advice. New technologies will create new markets. Publishers will need to adapt or they will perish.

Nevertheless please allow me a few remarks.

IPA and national publishers associations cannot tell publishers how to operate. They can however lobby governments to ensure that the Internet provides a real market place. A real market place has rules and these are enforced. It is therefore IPA's role to lobby internationally, to ensure that copyright law can be enforced on the Internet. The WIPO Copyright Treaty did just that and extended copyright laws to the Internet. Whilst the legal framework is in place internationally, we all know about the piracy problem on the Internet. This will not be solved over night. Still there are now more and more unlawful offers on the internet on special platforms. This battle against piracy will be won only through the provision of services and product platforms that are better than those that pirates can offer and a proper notice and take down provision in the digital copyright laws.

Secondly IPA embraces new technology but warns against techno-exuberance. Many publishers have burned themselves by jumping into a new technology before its customers were ready to do so. We have seen the birth and rapid death of the CD in educational publishing. We have seen the many false starts with e-books. Laptops in schools have been introduced and, in many cases, withdrawn again because they were very expensive and showed no better learning results. At the same time scholarly journal publishing has gone completely electronic, and whilst the business models of the future are debated, the new ways of delivery and updating are firmly established.

12.The future of publishing

Looking into the future, publishers need not be afraid. It is a great time to be a publisher and challenging to the president of the international publishers association... Paper publishing will continue for the foreseeable future, but new media require new content and publishers can step in to create the content that new generations want.

Again, as associations we cannot tell publishers what to do, but we can influence government to create a legislative environment that allows business to develop. In education the government influence is direct. In most other areas the government influence is indirect, but almost as strong.

This is probably an area where IPA and the Syndicate of Publishers' Union in Lebanon have the greatest potential for collaboration. Many IPA members are happy to share their experience in lobbying governments. I am sure there are many issues that are being discussed for the first time here where other associations also have a wealth of experience. Equally IPA members would like to know what policies you are pushing for here to facilitate the development of a vibrant book culture in Lebanon.

13.IPA's ©-conference in Abu Dhabi

IPA is an international association founded to lobby for publishers all over the world through their associations. It therefore strongly depends on its members to develop the association's activities. As a general rule you get as much out of IPA as you put into it. If you only pay your membership fee, you can be safe in the knowledge that we are defending your rights at international fora. If you come to our meetings you will have an opportunity to meet publishers from around the world. Not only will you discover a lot of people who share the same values and challenges. You will also find practical solutions to your problems, or at least hear how they shouldn't be approached.

On 28 February and 1 March IPA will be hosting an international conference on copyright in Abu Dhabi, just before the book fair. More than 250 participants have signed up so far.

It would be lovely to see representatives of the Syndicate of Publishers' Union in Lebanon there. People who come to these kinds of conferences take the long term view of the publishing industry. The publishers who go will also find potential new business partners to talk to. It is in these kinds of settings, without the pressure of the hard sell, that new contacts can be made.

Dear Audience, Mr Mayor of Beirut,

I came here to celebrate with you Beirut World Book Capital. Now I am here, I have seen what you have achieved already with two months to go, and I am very impressed indeed. I spoke yesterday with your enthusiastic general coordinator Dr Leila Barakat, and learned that you have already 600 projects and are not finished yet: still proposals are coming in.

I saw in the streets the book monuments dedicated to authors: an excellent idea. Again, thank you for having me here.

I would like to complement you and the Ministry of Culture with the excellent work that has been achieved: I am impressed.

Thank you