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Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa  
President of the Republic of South Africa  
Union Buildings, Pretoria  
By email: [presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za](mailto:presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za)

14 March 2024

**RE: Copyright Amendment Bill [B13F - 2017]**

Your Excellency,

On 29 February 2024, the Copyright Amendment Bill [B13F - 2017] was approved by both Houses of Parliament and sent to the President for assent. I am writing to kindly request your assent to the Bill as a matter of priority.

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international NGO that works with libraries to enable access to knowledge in over 50 developing and transition economy countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. In South Africa, EIFL has worked with academic libraries to support teaching, learning and research, and with public libraries to develop ICT skills and create employment opportunities in disadvantaged communities.

EIFL has been supportive of efforts to reform the 1978 Copyright Act, in accordance with international standards and South Africa's international treaty obligations, to create a modern copyright framework that supports quality education for all South Africans, promotes literacy and reading, facilitates researchers, innovators and start-ups using the latest digital technologies, and contributes to attainment of Sustainable Development Goals on education and access to information.

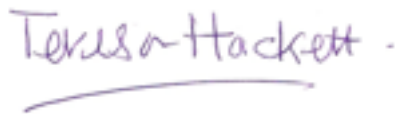
EIFL welcomes approval by Parliament of the Copyright Amendment Bill. The apartheid-era Copyright Act can no longer stand still, and it is time to move forward for the benefit of all the people of South Africa. While certain vested interests benefitting from the status quo in South Africa vigorously oppose change, business models can - and do - adapt to new copyright rules and changing regulatory frameworks that are happening around the world in response to technological developments and in support of national priorities. (Many provisions in the Bill are drawn from already existing copyright laws).

The Bill strengthens the rights of individual creators to ownership and management of their works. It addresses transparency in the collective management of rights and the distribution of royalty payments to artists. It supports online teaching and learning (highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic), enables libraries and other cultural heritage institutions to preserve South Africa's rich creative expression for future generations, and safeguards from floods and fires (highlighted by the UCT Jagger Library fire: due to copyright barriers, some items had no digital backups), and it boosts library services to persons with print disabilities (highlighted by the ruling of the Constitutional Court that sections of the Copyright Act are unconstitutional because they discriminate against blind and visually impaired people).

EIFL commends the detailed and diligent examination of the Copyright Amendment Bill over the last seven years in an open and democratic process (making it one of the most scrutinized copyright bills by a legislature).

As the Copyright Amendment Bill comes before you once again, we hope that you will assent as a matter of priority in order to bring South Africa's law on copyright into the digital age.

Yours sincerely



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