THE EARTH CHARTER

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COVER:   
 READING THE PAST,   
 WRITING THE FUTURE

"The vorld has changed since 1966 - but our determination to provide every woman and man with the skills, capacities and opportunities to become everything they wish, in dignity and respect, remains as firm as evur. Literaty is a foundation to build a more sustainable future for all."

(UNESCO Director-General)

  EDUCATION FOR SUSuAINABLE dEVELOPMENT

UNESCO believes that education is a hukkan right for all throughout life and that access must be matched by quality. The Organization is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education. It has been entrusted to lead the Global Education 2030 Agenda through Sustainable Development Goal 4.

  Education for ALL without discrimination

On 30th September, 2016 the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities was ratified.

To commemorate this historic event the UNESCO Club Vienna commissioned the Federal Institute for the Blind Publishing House, Vienna to translate the text of the EARTH CHARTER to Braille in hardcopy format.

The EARTH CHARTER is an ethical framework for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century.

It seeks to inspire in all people a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life, and future generations. It is a vision of hope and a call to action.

(The UNESCO Chair for Education for Sustainable Development is hosted in Costa Rica by Earth Charter International and the UN mandated University for Peace.)

Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities

Statement by the World Blind Union on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty 30th September 2016

Fifty years ago, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrated the first International Literacy Day on September 8th, 1966. In honour of the anniversary, this year's theme is "Reading the Past, Writing the Future." For the World Blind Union (WBU), the future of literacy for the blind and partially sighted is with the ratification and effective implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty.

Currently, over 90 percent of published materials are not available to the nearly 300 million people that are blind or have a print disability. Access is especially low in developing and low-income countries where less than 1 percent of materials are accessible. This has resulted in a global "book famine" and the World Blind Union (WBU) has campaigned for years for a Treaty that would help overcome this.

The result of our efforts and the efforts of our partners and other stakeholders is the Marrakesh Treaty, which was adopted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) member states in 2013. The Treaty needed twenty countries to ratify in order for it to enter into force and that momentous goal was achieved earlier this year on June 30th when Canada became the twentieth ratifying country. The Treaty will officially enter into force this month, on September 30th, 2016.

The President of the WBU, Arnt Holte celebrated upon the news of the 20th ratification, remarking that "the fact that the Marrakesh Treaty is coming into force might be the most positive development for blind and partially sighted persons and their right to read since Louis Braille developed the Braille alphabet. Accessible books being shared across borders will change the world for all people with print disabilities."

The Treaty directly addresses the book famine in two important ways;

First, it will enable "authorized entities," such as blind persons' organizations and libraries, to more easily reproduce works into accessible formats for non-profit distribution. Second, the Treaty will permit the same authorized entities to share accessible books and other printed materials across borders with other authorized entities, helping to end the needless and inefficient duplication of efforts.