

# Copyright Reporter

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## Day 1: Keynote address: Directions in Global Copyright Reform

### Dr Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization

*This is an edited transcript of Dr Gurry's Keynote Address to the 15th Biennial Copyright Law and Practice Symposium in Sydney on 13 October 2011*

Ladies and gentlemen: a very good morning to everyone. Let me thank the Australian Copyright Council and the organisers for giving me this opportunity to be here, which I very much welcome. It's a great pleasure always to be in Sydney even if I do come from Melbourne!

I was supposed to speak this morning on "Directions in Global Copyright Reform". The first thing I think that I would say is that "directions" is a very strong word, because we're not quite sure yet of the destination. However, despite that seemingly very pessimistic start, I must say that I would like to strike a cautiously optimistic note this morning: optimistic because I do think that there has been a slight change of gears and a shifting of pace in respect of copyright internationally; cautious because of course it is always very fragile, as it depends on so many different parties and because the task itself is extremely complex.

So let me start with some of the signs of the changes in speed or velocity around copyright and related rights.

At the annual meeting of the WIPO General Assembly, which took place two weeks ago in Geneva, a decision was taken to reconvene the Diplomatic Conference on Audiovisual Performances.<sup>1</sup> As I think many of you will remember, [that matter] failed in the year 2000 and we now have agreement on it. But before I say something about that particular issue, I want to say that the most important thing here is not so much the decision itself, but the underlying atmosphere of constructive engagement which enabled the decision to be taken. That is, indeed, what we need as the basis for moving forward on copyright issues in the future.

I think that there were some signs in that constructive engagement that the north/south division, which has absolutely plagued [copyright law] internationally for most of the last 10 years, has softened to some considerable extent. I would also like to believe that the same possibility of dialogue is opening with respect to content providers and technology developers; the latter's work has been pushing content providers into new forms of storage, distribution and exploitation of their works. That dialogue, I think, is something that is very much welcomed and is certainly a key to future solutions in the area of copyright in the digital environment.

<sup>1</sup> Ed: the Recommendation is available at [www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc\\_details.jsp?doc\\_id=174286](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=174286).