



For Immediate Release
May 28, 2004

Contact: Maria Strong
(202) 833-4198

THE U.S. COPYRIGHT INDUSTRIES APPLAUD THE SIGNING OF THE U.S. - CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (CAFTA)

Washington, D.C. -- The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), comprised of six trade associations and their over 1,300 companies representing the U.S. copyright industries, applauded today's signing of the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Eric H. Smith, IIPA President, said, "Ambassador Zoellick and his negotiators merit praise for achieving high standards of copyright protection and enforcement in the CAFTA Chapter on Intellectual Property Rights. IIPA congratulates these nations for agreeing to a strong text that should enable them to further develop their own local copyright-based industries and better attract e-commerce investment. As a result, the United States and these nations signal the importance of disseminating copyright-based enabling technologies and entertainment products among our neighbors as well as around the world."

"The CAFTA recognizes that achieving comprehensive and high copyright protection and enforcement standards will support the U.S. economy, job creation, and the future of global e-commerce when these standards are adopted throughout this entire region. These nations also realize that their economies will increasingly depend on the creativity of their citizens, as supported by comprehensive copyright protections, as new markets develop to promote the digital transmission of copyright material globally." Smith added, "Effective implementation of these new standards, both on-the-books and in actual enforcement practice, is crucial."

Other CAFTA chapters will also have a positive impact on the copyright-based industries. For example, CAFTA grants full market access and national treatment for computer and related services by adopting a "negative list" approach and by having no reservations in this important sector for the U.S. information technology industry. Although some reservations on market access were taken by some of the countries regarding audiovisual services, none of the non-conforming measures represent onerous restrictions on U.S. exports of filmed entertainment. As with other recent U.S. Free Trade Agreements, the CAFTA prevents the application of customs duties on electronically delivered digital products, assures the non-discriminatory treatment of digital products, addresses the valuation of physically delivered digital products, and provides commitments to cooperate on electronic commerce policy.

* * *

The IIPA is a private-sector coalition formed in 1984 to represent the U.S. copyright-based industries in bilateral and multilateral efforts to improve international protection of copyrighted materials. IIPA's six member associations represent over 1,300 U.S. companies producing and distributing materials protected by copyright laws throughout the world – all types of computer software including business applications software and entertainment software (such as videogame CDs and cartridges, personal computer CD-ROMs and multimedia products); theatrical films, television programs, home videos and digital representations of audiovisual works; music, records, CDs, and audiocassettes; and textbooks, tradebooks, reference and professional publications and journals (in both electronic and print media). Visit the IIPA website at www.iipa.com.