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IIPA Applauds the Free Trade Agreement Between Jordan and the United States

Washington — The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) and its seven trade association members making up the copyright-based industries today commended the Jordanian and United States governments on the conclusion of a cutting-edge Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Jordan FTA incorporates the most up-to-date international standards for copyright protection and enforcement and paves the way for increased economic development in Jordan in the information and entertainment sectors. Jordan has taken the lead over all countries in the Middle East region by being the first country to commit to ratify and implement the two "Internet" treaties, the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, that establish the essential legal infrastructure for trade in copyright products and for the development of e-commerce in the region.

Eric H. Smith, President of IIPA, noted: "We applaud King Abdullah II and his able negotiators for taking this giant step in assuming leadership within the Arab world in the area of trade and intellectual property protection. The King's foresight in recognizing, in particular, the importance of opening up the Jordanian market by liberalizing the entire services market and by adopting the most modern standards for protection of intellectual property in the new digital and e-commerce environment will be globally acknowledged and praised. IIPA members look to early ratification and implementation of the new "Internet" treaties, setting a critical precedent in the entire region. This action alone will signal to the New Information Economy that Jordan wants to take the lead in bringing investment in the information and entertainment sector into Jordan. We also applaud the Clinton Administration for its leadership in fashioning this historic agreement during a very troubled time in the region. Today is an important day in the history of intellectual property rights protection and trade in the Middle East."

About the IIPA and the Impact of the U.S. Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy

The International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) is a coalition of seven trade associations representing U.S. copyright-based industries in bilateral and multilateral efforts to open up foreign markets closed by piracy and other market access barriers. These member associations represent over 1,450 U.S. companies producing and distributing works protected by copyright laws throughout the world — all types of computer software including business software and entertainment software (such as videogame CDs and cartridges, personal computer CDs and multimedia products); motion pictures, television programs and home videocassettes; music, records, CDs, and audiocassettes; and textbooks, tradebooks, reference and professional publications and journals (in both electronic and print media). According to Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy: The 1999 Report, prepared for IIPA by Economists, Inc., the core copyright industries accounted for \$348.4 billion in value added to the U.S. economy, or approximately 4.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1997 (the last year for which complete data is available). The core copyright industries generated an estimated \$66.85 billion in foreign sales and exports in 1997, an 11.1% gain over 1996 and larger than the foreign sales and exports of the food, tobacco, apparel, textile, and aircraft industries combined.