



**For Immediate Release: Thursday, June 29, 2006**

**Press Inquiries:**

Kevin King

703-286-0814 -- [kking@horngroup.com](mailto:kking@horngroup.com)

**ODF Alliance Applauds Global Initiatives to Use  
Software Based on Open Standards**

*Alliance Swells to More than 220 Members in 40 Countries*

Washington, DC, June 29, 2006 – The OpenDocument Format Alliance (ODF Alliance), a broad cross-section of associations, academia and industry dedicated to improving access to electronic government documents, today hailed initiatives in Belgium, France and Denmark that would mandate the use of software based on open standards, demonstrating continued global momentum for support of OpenDocument Format (ODF).

Belgium's Council of Ministers adopted a recommendation on 23 June which effectively introduces ODF as the required standard within its governmental agencies for the creation and exchange of text, spreadsheets, and presentation documents. The Belgian Council is recommending a phased approach in which computer users would first have to be able to read files created using ODF.

Similarly, in France, that country's Direction Générale de la Modernisation de l'État specifically refers to ODF in its draft of the Référentiel Général d'Interopérabilité, or RGI Interoperability Guidelines. The current draft recommends that systems used by public administrations need to run -- or be compatible with -- vendor-neutral, open, and royalty-free XML-based document formats such as the OpenDocument Format. Another draft of the guidelines is expected this fall.

And in Denmark, the Folketinget (parliament) unanimously decided on 2 June that by January 2008, all digital information exchanged between authorities and citizens, companies and institutions, should be available in formats based on open standards. Also, all development and purchase of software for use in the public sector should be based on open standards by 1 January 2008 at the latest. The roadmap for implementing the decision is expected to be considered later this year. In addition the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation as well as the Ministry of Finance have announced that as of September 2006 they will publish all their documents in ODF file format next to .doc and pdf.

The recent, sweeping approval of ODF as a global standard by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is thought to be particularly significant for its adoption in Europe, as the ISO standards have special recognition under European Union Directives. Belgium's decision, in particular, will be closely watched in Europe, as Brussels is the seat of the European Union.

Meanwhile, the movement supporting ODF is gaining momentum worldwide. Last week, India's leading technical institutions, global IT companies and government agencies held their first national event in support of ODF, including the formation of the Indian Chapter of the ODF Alliance. In less than four months, membership in the ODF Alliance has rocketed from 36 organizations to more than 220 members in 40 countries.

"The embrace of open standards worldwide, as well as the Alliance's strongly growing ranks, demonstrate remarkable interest in bringing ODF to the fore as a viable, universally recognized basis for the information technology blueprint of governments," said Marino Marcich, Managing Director of the ODF Alliance.

For more information about the ODF Alliance, please visit our Web site at <http://www.odfalliance.org>

###