

SPEECH BY KENYA DELEGATION AT
THE FIFTY-SIXTH SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE
ASSEMBLIES OF WIPO MEMBER STATES
HELD IN GENEVA 3RD TO 11TH OCTOBER 2016

President of the Assembly,

The Delegation of Kenya conveys warm greetings from the Government and People of the Republic of Kenya to the Director General Dr. Francis Gurry and the Secretariat of the Organization during this 56th series of WIPO General Assemblies. The Delegation recognizes the presence of Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors and Leaders of Delegation from other countries represented at this year's Assemblies. The Delegation equally takes this opportunity to appreciate the presence of heads of intellectual property offices, bureaus of WIPO, member states and observer organisations here present.

Mr. President, in this era of information age, creativity and innovation have become key technological innovation drivers in addressing various challenges posed by disease, hunger, poverty and unemployment. Besides, creativity and innovation play an important role of mitigating negative effects of climate change and desertification. They provide solution to issues of access to medicine, food security and preservation of biodiversity.

The Delegation recognises that there is a strong need to ensure a consistent growth in productivity and competitiveness. The resulting procompetitive and transparent market is a by-product of an effective intellectual property system characterized by adequate protection and effective enforcement founded on a balanced appropriate set of collateral policies, legal and institutional frameworks.

In this regard, the Delegation wishes to note with great appreciation the programs and activities that have been undertaken during 2015/16 in Kenya with the able support of WIPO. The activities include:

- Technical support to the Kenya Industrial Property Institute in upgrading and maintenance of the Intellectual Property Automated System (IPAS);
- Digitization of Patent and Trade Marks Registries;
- Activities on copyright and creative industries;
- Awareness creation symposia to relevant members of the public;
- Support on the creation and strengthening of Kenya's institutional capacity for exploitation of traditional knowledge based assets;
- Continued participation in the modernization of intellectual property administration in Kenya; and
- Facilitation of Kenya's participation in numerous international seminars, workshops and conferences.

This is clear manifestation that the WIPO's Development Agenda is indeed yielding results in Kenya. The Delegation reiterates that the Development Agenda incorporates a number of projects that are critical to Africa. The projects such as development of national intellectual property policies and implementation strategies are worth mentioning. I wish to take this opportunity to salute the Governments of Japan, South Korea and Australia for working with WIPO to provide support to Africa, which have so far benefitted a number of beneficiaries in Kenya. It is our strong belief that these benefits will extend to more developing countries in Africa.

The Delegation notes that a common understanding on the need for effective progress on issues relating to protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and traditional cultural expressions remains critical at WIPO. Kenya Government has enacted a law in this regard. My government therefore is keen to see total devotion at the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee and full backing by all member states across the divide for a speedy conclusion on all pending issues including on patent disclosure, access to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

Mr. President, Kenya recognizes the role played by intellectual property rights in relevant aspects of human endeavour. More often, it has had to modernize her intellectual property policies and legislation to conform to national, regional and international framework and best practices as well as to address emerging issues such as biotechnology, ICT, food security and fight against counterfeit. This is in the spirit of the Kenya Constitution which has mandated the government to support, promote and protect the intellectual property rights of the people of Kenya. As a result, a repeal of the Kenya's Trade Marks Act and amendment to Industrial Property Act

2001 are ongoing in line with the current Constitution.

Mr. President, Kenya Government in collaboration with other international agencies through intellectual property offices continues to encourage the Kenyan public to appreciate the use of intellectual property and innovation as stimulants to local products' value addition and demand in the global market. Currently, the Kenya Government with the able support of WIPO is working on two projects that relate to branding of sisal baskets from Kenya's Taita Taveta County, as well as, exploring prospects for leveraging market potential of Kisii soapstone through innovation and intellectual property rights. A team of experts from WIPO and Kenya are on the ground executing the sisal basket branding and will further explore the implementation of the Kisii soapstone.

The Delegation notes with sincere appreciation WIPO's continued support of the TISCs project for increased access to available scientific and technical information in developing countries. By improving access to scholarly literature from diverse fields of science and technology, the TISCs project has high potential in supporting researchers in developing countries towards creating and developing solutions to technical challenges faced by the resilient society in day to day life. On her part therefore, the Government of Kenya is encouraging and promoting the establishment of TISCs in institutions of learning including those for research and development in this regard. It acknowledges the recent WIPO sponsored audit exercise recently carried out in Kenya and hopes that the report will be of great help to WIPO.

The Delegation is grateful to WIPO for a positive progress on the ongoing physical infrastructure development at the Kenya industrial property Institute, particularly the outsourced digitization project of its Registries as well as training of staff members. Again, the support is a clear testimony that WIPO remains sharply focused on segmenting and targeting specific needs and expectations of the Institute for a consistent growth of industrial property administration systems in Kenya.

Finally, the Delegation extends best regards to the President and other Officers of the assemblies and wishes all delegations fruitful deliberations and success in the 56th Series of the WIPO Assemblies.

Thank you Mr. President.