

**Statement by Mr N Samasuwo, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe at the Opening Session of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies**

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**Thank you Chair,**

Zimbabwe joins other countries in extending our gratitude to H. E. Ambassador Tatiana Molcean, Chairperson of the Assemblies, the Vice Chairs, the Director General, Mr Daren Tang and the WIPO Secretariat for the excellent preparations and documentation for the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assemblies of WIPO. We have every confidence that under your guidance leadership, we shall make good progress.

Zimbabwe associates itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Africa Group.

**Chair,**

We are happy to report that Zimbabwe continues to make steady progress in Covid-19 vaccinations and we acknowledge that intellectual property created a conducive platform for expeditious creation of vaccines. However, my delegation emphasizes the role of flexibilities and exceptions to intellectual property rights which in ensuring equitable, safe and affordable supply of medicines, vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics to populations in developing and least developed countries.

The Covid-19 pandemic also exposed the shortcomings of the current international copyright system in addressing educational and research rights to ensure access to educational material for underprivileged children in times of crises, and efficient, less costly and cumbersome sharing of research material to address global challenges in health, extreme poverty, malnutrition and food crises, climate change, natural disasters among many common challenges faced by humanity.

We therefore reiterate our unequivocal support for the draft work programme on limitations and exceptions the Africa Group in the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related

Rights (SCCR). In the context of Copyright, Tino Makoni a young Zimbabwean has grown into an accomplished illustrator and comic book artist as acknowledged in the Director General's report.

The challenge of our time is to create a harmonious balance between sustainable development and IPR protection, through sufficient, effective limitations and exceptions.

The IP ecosystem is central to Zimbabwe's national development strategies. Zimbabwe restructured its IP office by setting up a semi-autonomous entity, the Companies and Intellectual Property Office of Zimbabwe. The new Office is integral to promoting IP as a tool for innovation, expression of art and culture and technological development in the country.

Zimbabwe appreciates support provided by WIPO, spearheaded by the WIPO Academy namely capacity building such as training collaborations, the Madrid Fellowship and Master in Intellectual Property (MIP) programmes jointly offered by WIPO, ARIPO and Africa University. The interest and uptake in IP studies in Zimbabwe is indeed remarkable.

**Chair,**

Zimbabwe prioritises implementation of the forty-five WIPO Development Agenda Recommendations and urges the Secretariat to streamline the Development Agenda in all its work.

The convening of a diplomatic conference on the Design Law Treaty (DLT) is a long outstanding issue. We reiterate that a common workable solution should be found.

We also appreciate the inter-sessional work on the expansion of the Coordination Committee (COCO) and the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC). We believe that any expansion of these governing bodies must be in line with geographical equity and balance.

We join the call by the Assemblies to expedite the work of the IGC in accordance with its mandate. Zimbabwe also recognises

the positive work of the African Bureau work which should continue to receive more budgetary and administrative support.

**Finally, Chair,**

My delegation stands ready to work with you and all members in constructive engagement to solve our common objectives.

I thank you.

(2 minutes)