

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE
AFRICAN REGIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION (ARIPO) DURING THE FIFTY FIRST
SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE
MEMBER STATES OF WIPO, GENEVA, SEPTEMBER 22
TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2014.**

Madam President, Honourable Delegates,

It is a pleasure and honour for me, on behalf of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) to address the 54th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Madam President,

Firstly, please allow me to congratulate the Director General Dr. Francis Gurry on his well-deserved re-election for a second term and thank him for the new conference facilities which allow us to work in a good environment. This is a true testimony of his good work and commitment not only to WIPO but also to the development of intellectual property for the social and economic of our countries and the human race.

On this score, my delegation fully associates itself with the statements made by the delegation of Kenya on behalf of the African group and by the delegation of Benin behalf of the Least Developing Countries.

Madam President,

I wish to bring on record the activities undertaken by ARIPO and its Member States with the cooperation and support of WIPO. These activities have increased considerably and the working relationship between the two Organizations has grown from strength to strength.

WIPO through its Automation Division supports and helps ARIPO and its Member States and Potential Member States to upgrade and automation of business procedure in the administration and management of Intellectual Property (IP) through the Intellectual Property Automation Systems (IPAS) project.

The completion of the Joint project WIPO-KOICA-ARIPO -ZIPO for the upgrade of the ARIPO ICT infrastructure and those of its member states which is financed by the Government of the Republic of Korea through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) is expected to be end December, 2014. It is envisaged that all procedures for the processing of IP titles including online filing at the ARIPO and Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Office (ZIPO) (which is a pilot office) will be automated.

Madam President,

The importance of patent information in the technological and economic development of the ARIPO Member States remains one of the biggest priorities of the Organization. In this respect, ARIPO in cooperation

with WIPO has continued to ensure that the technological needs of the Member States are satisfied through the free-of-charge state-of-the-art search services facility.

In addition, WIPO in cooperation with ARIPO, have continued to organize workshops and seminars in the African region to create awareness on the importance and use of IP for technological and economic development.

The WIPO Seminar on Results Based Management which was held during the 37th Session of the ARIPO Administrative Council with the support of the Japanese Government from 20 to 23 November 2013 in Kampala, Uganda, for the benefit the Heads of IP Offices of the ARIPO Member States, brought a new input on the management of the IP Offices and at the ARIPO Secretariat and has had a lasting impact such that most national offices and the ARIPO Office itself have decided to adopt the management system.

To complement WIPO's effort in capacity building and human resources development in the region, ARIPO, with the support of WIPO, the ARIPO Office has increased its capacity building operations in the region by providing training in all matters relating to IP locally.

In this respect, I am pleased to report the involvement of WIPO in this initiative through its various Divisions. For example, ARIPO in cooperation with the World Wide Academy and the Africa

University, have continued to develop the Masters Degree Training Programme for the training of trainers in IP which now in its seventh year and by next year, over 200 students will have graduated with Master Degrees in Intellectual Property.

Madam President,

ARIPO is cognisant of the need for the harmonization between the two regional organizations on intellectual property in Africa (OAPI and ARIPO) and concrete activities aimed at ensuring the harmonization are being undertaken at different levels such as: training strategies, development of a legal frame work on Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources and Expressions of Folklore. WIPO has continued to support ARIPO and its member states in the development of relevant national IP laws and strategies for the strategic use of IP for social and economic development.

ARIPO would also like to commend WIPO for the progress made on the IGC work and it is hoped that these efforts will soon lead to concrete steps towards the adoption of a legal binding instrument for the benefit of holders of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Folklore assets and the whole of human kind.

Further WIPO is supporting ARIPO and its member states in the development and harmonization of IP laws in region and has set up a joint WIPO-ARIPO task force on the improvement of the Banjul and Harare Protocols which will eventually lead to the linking of both

protocols to the Madrid Agreement and the Hague Agreement respectively.

I therefore greatly acknowledge and appreciate the support rendered by WIPO and other cooperating partners through bilateral Agreements that bind us together in our endeavours to develop the IP in Africa and the world at large.

Further, the next 38th Session of the ARIPO Administrative Council will be held in Victoria Falls, in Zimbabwe, from November 17 to 23, 2014 and hereby wish to use this opportunity to invite the WIPO Director General and our cooperating partners to come and participate in this annual important event which directs the management and the operations of the ARIPO Secretariat.

Thank you for your attention.