



**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE  
56<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY  
ORGANISATION**

**DELIVERED BY MRS. VIRGINIA MABIZA**

**SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS**

Thank you Mr. Chairman

It is my honour and privilege to present this statement on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe. At the outset allow me to assure you Zimbabwe's full support and cooperation as we navigate the Agenda items before us. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairperson of the Assemblies on his appointment and are certain that under your stewardship, we will be able to reach a successful conclusion of this meeting. We would also like to appreciate the Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry and his Secretariat for the successes that have been registered by the organization since the last Assemblies as well as for the excellent preparations for this year's Assemblies.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. We take note of the Director General's report and underscore the need to consider the future normative agenda of WIPO and sustainable framework for IP development that benefits all.

**Mr Chairman,**

My delegation would like to update this august body on the developments that have taken place in Zimbabwe on the IP landscape since the last Assemblies in 2015. Zimbabwe has now domesticated the provisions of the Madrid Protocol giving legal certainty to users who extend the legal protection of their marks to Zimbabwe. My delegation would like to give its sincere appreciation to WIPO and

in particular the Legal Division of the Brands and Designs Sector for their technical support during this process.

**Mr Chairman,**

The Zimbabwe National IP Policy and Strategy which the Government developed with the assistance and technical cooperation from the WIPO, in particular the African Bureau, will be launched during the beginning of 2017.

Zimbabwe has benefited immensely from the WIPO training programmes offered in conjunction with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO). The joint Master's Degree programme in IP offered in conjunction with ARIPO and the Africa University has helped in building the capacities of Zimbabweans and other African States in the area of intellectual property.

**Mr Chairman,**

WIPO's normative work in the area of traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and folklore is an important area that requires commitment by all member states. It is commendable that the IGC managed to reconvene this year to find pathways towards reaching consensus in coming up with international legal instrument(s). It is the hope of my delegation that this process will yield the desired results for all the WIPO member states. Moreover, Zimbabwe continues to value all the other normative processes of the various Committees and hope that all delegations will continue positive engagement with a view to ensuring that the organization achieves its mandate and set objectives.

**Mr Chairman,**

In conclusion, Zimbabwe will continue to cooperate with the Secretariat and other Member States to create a more effective intellectual property system at the international level as well as to build respect for IP for the benefit of, not only the rights holders but also the generality of the population.

I thank you.