



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY:
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SERIES OF ASSEMBLIES

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**Thank you, Mr. President,
WIPO Director General,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Mr. President, I would like to join other delegations in congratulating you on your appointment as the President of the 59th series of meetings of the General Assemblies of WIPO Member States. We assure you and your bureau of Botswana's full support to ensure a successful conclusion of the General Assemblies.

My delegation also wishes to thank and congratulate the outgoing President and his officers for their hard-work and leadership over the past two years. We thank the Director General and his staff for the effort they put into the work of the organisation, including preparing for this series of meetings.

At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group.

Mr. President,

Botswana wishes to recognise the work of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications on the development of the Design Law Treaty. We support the proposal of the Africa Group to include a disclosure requirement as well as technical assistance as part of the treaty.

We hope this General Assembly will conclude this matter and move to convene a Diplomatic Conference to consider the Design Law Treaty at the earliest time possible.

My delegation observes with concern that after two decades, the IGC has still not finalised its work. It is disappointing to note that even after the General Assemblies of 2018/2019 the Committee has not yet presented any concrete proposal on how to protect Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions. Botswana is a country endowed with Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge which continue to be misappropriated.

Without an international legally binding instrument(s), biopiracy and misappropriation of our resources will continue. We therefore urge the IGC to finalise its work and develop legally binding instrument(s) to protect our GRs, TK and TCE that will benefit many of our citizens and improve their livelihoods.

Another issue of concern is the slow progress with regards to finalisation of the treaty for the protection of broadcasting organisations. Mr. President, my delegation's concern emanates from the fact that as we delay, technology continues to advance. Further delays mean that we risk adopting a treaty dealing with issues that are no longer relevant.

That notwithstanding, my delegation is pleased with progress made in implementing the Action Plan for limitations and exceptions for libraries, archives, museums and educational and research institutions.

We are grateful to WIPO for the regional seminar for Africa held on 12 and 13th June 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. This seminar gave copyright offices from across Africa a rare opportunity to come together and consider this topic with a view to assess and determine how the agenda of the SCCR can be moved forward on this matter.

Mr. President,

In the same vein my delegation expresses gratitude for the support WIPO extends to Botswana for the development and growth of her intellectual property (IP) system. WIPO through its Building Respect for IP division provided capacity building by developing a prosecutors manual and training our Police and Prosecutors to deal with IP crimes, which continue to bear fruit on issues of IP enforcement.

Botswana is also grateful to WIPO for the funding of JPO for supporting a project to brand Botswana baskets. This project which supports rural basket weaving women in the Chobe region, North - western Botswana, will develop quality standards, develop a grading system and a brand for the baskets that will allow the women to market and sell their baskets in international markets. It is our firm conviction that this project will lead to economic empowerment and better living standards for these rural women.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that national and regional processes on the protection of traditional knowledge, cultural expression/folklore and genetic resources as well as other intellectual property issues can only benefit from an emerging consensus within the international community at large.

My delegation stands ready to play its part and looks forward to a constructive dialogue during which we will learn from the rich experiences of other Member States in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. President.