



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

**DELIVERED BY MRS. VIGINIA MABIZA**

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

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Allow me to begin by thanking outgoing Chair, Ambassador Paivi Kairamo for the important work she has done over the course of the last two years. Let me also join other delegations in welcoming the new Chair of the General Assembly, H.E Ambassador Gabriel Duque. My delegation is confident that you will ably guide our discussions during this meeting and we certainly believe that we will reach concrete decisions on the key issues, particularly the normative issues of the organization, currently before us. We would also like to thank the Director General for his report. We urge him to continue working harder in ensuring that WIPO continue its efforts in building a global intellectual property system that benefits all the member states.

From the outset, Zimbabwe wishes to align itself with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

WIPO's normative work in the area of traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and folklore is an important area that requires renewed and urgent commitment by all member states. While it is regrettable that not much progress has been made over the years towards reaching consensus in coming up with international legal instrument(s) for the protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and folklore it is the sincere hope of my delegation that focused and constructive discussions will be undertaken during this meeting with a view to renewing the mandate of the Committee in line with the proposal of the African Group to transform the IGC to a standing committee.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to applaud the work being done by the WIPO's Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) in implementing the Development Agenda Recommendations. Just a few weeks ago we witnessed the launch of a development agenda programme aimed at building capacity in the use of appropriate technology, specific technical and scientific information to address development challenges in our sister country Uganda. The continent stands to benefit from such projects as they help in developing the technological capacities in our countries. It is the hope of my delegation that several other countries will also benefit from such projects in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is happy to report to this august body that Zimbabwe has finally joined the Madrid family having acceded to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid

Agreement concerning the International Registration of Marks (1989). The Instruments of Accession were deposited with the Director General on the on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 with the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 becoming the effective date of entry into force. We are, indeed, grateful to the WIPO Secretariat particularly those in the Madrid section for their assistance and support since the initial stages when the Government of Zimbabwe took the decision to accede to the Protocol.

Chairman,

My delegation would also like to thank the WIPO Secretariat and especially the Regional Bureau for Africa for the technical assistance and support they have rendered in assisting Zimbabwe to come up with a National Intellectual Property Policy which was duly validated at a stakeholders' workshop held in Harare in early September 2015. Once launched, this policy will help to bring intellectual property issues to the fore of the development processes in the country especially in areas such as copyright and creative industries, public health as well as SMEs.

Chairman,

Zimbabwe attaches great important to the promotion and protection of human rights particularly in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. To that end I am also happy to inform this house that the government has initiated the ratification process for the Marrakesh Treaty.

Chairman

Zimbabwe continues to value the technical assistance provided by WIPO to various IP institutions in Zimbabwe under current bilateral programmes. We are also grateful to WIPO for the excellent cooperation with our regional organization ARIPO which cooperation has seen the region benefiting greatly in terms of intellectual property services as well as training. We, in particular, appreciate WIPO's and ARIPO's collaborative and steadfast support for the Regional Masters Programme in Intellectual Property that Zimbabwe has the honour to host at Africa University. This programme continues to command international respect and demand for it on the entire African continent continues to rise. We therefore count on WIPO's continued support as the programme is pivotal for the advancement of IP education, promotion and protection of IP rights in Africa. We, in the same vein, call for increased resources to the WIPO Academy to enable it to fulfill its mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Zimbabwe will continue to cooperate and 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

