



**Statement by Jamaica to the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO  
61<sup>st</sup> Series of Meetings  
21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your appointment to preside over this session of the WIPO General Assembly. We look forward to an engaging and productive session under your Chairmanship.

At the outset Chair, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate from Panama on behalf of GRULAC.

Mr. Chair, the Government of Jamaica, would also like to take the opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the outgoing Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry, for his significant contribution to the important work of WIPO, not only in his capacity as Director General but also in the varying other capacities in which he has served the Organization over the past 30 years. We commend him for his astute leadership which was evident in the agility and responsiveness of WIPO in seeking to address the needs of developing and least developed countries, particularly in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth and development through IP. We wish Dr. Gurry all the very best in his future endeavours.

In the same breath Mr. Chair, the delegation of Jamaica extends congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang, on his appointment to the post of Director General of WIPO. We are confident of the strong leadership which will be brought to bear, by Mr. Tang, in steering WIPO towards achieving its core mission, which is, namely, to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables and facilitates innovation and creativity for the benefit of all its Member States. We are also confident that the skills and experience for which Mr. Tang has become known, will benefit WIPO as well as its Member States.

Jamaica certainly looks forward to his guidance of our work on the important issues on the agenda of this Organization, including on the normative agenda, the mainstreaming of the forty five (45) Development Agenda Recommendations and the promotion of cooperation and technical assistance. Jamaica is confident

that Mr. Tang will ensure the continued strong performance of WIPO's global IP systems and maintain WIPO's healthy and stable financial situation, while promoting innovation in Member States.

Chair, the unprecedented global health crisis caused by COVID-19 represents a global challenge to the essential security interests of all countries and the most vulnerable are those living in developing and least developed countries, like ours, with not as robust health systems. Access to affordable medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and medical equipment as well as access to the technologies to produce them, are indispensable to the fight against this pandemic. Such technologies should be broadly available to manufacture and supply what is needed to address the pandemic. The existence of patents on products or processes, generally, limits the acquisition of pharmaceutical products at low prices or in sufficient quantities.

Jamaica wishes to encourage that the relevant WIPO Treaties continue to be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WIPO Members' right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all. WIPO has a vital and ethical role to play in striking an acceptable balance between, on the one hand, preserving the health of our populations and on the other, saving the lives of our people, when looking at the commercial aspects of intellectual property rights.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The past year has been very active for Jamaica and its Intellectual Property Office (JIPO) despite the pandemic. We have sought to promote and emphasize the importance of intellectual property, not as a legal, construct but at the core of development and trade. JIPO has sought to work with WIPO to implement modern and inclusive intellectual property laws that will facilitate the economic growth and development of our small island state and consequently, inure to the benefit of Jamaica and every Jamaican. We commend the staff of WIPO, including the LAC Bureau, for the continued cooperation and responsiveness to members, even within the context of unprecedented challenges.

The Patent and Designs Act has been passed and we are preparing instruments of accession to several WIPO treaties. My delegation wishes to place on record our thanks to DG Gurry who has facilitated the continuous support of the Secretariat, including the hosting of two seminars in Jamaica in March of this year, prior to the closing of our borders.

**Mr. Chairman,**

It is worth noting that our Protection of Geographical Indications Act and Regulations have also been amended to provide the higher level of protection afforded to wines and spirits to all goods as well as to establish a Geographical Indications Advisory Committee. Work is also underway to accede to the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origins and GIs. In addition, we are far advanced with legislation for the protection of new varieties of plants and in that regard, have been working closely with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) Secretariat to ensure that the law will adequately protect the rights of breeders in a manner consistent with the UPOV Convention.

Jamaica recognizes the importance of WIPO's Technology and Innovation Support Centres (TISCs) and their contribution to development and innovation in Developing Countries. This contributed to our decision to sign the Service Level Agreement which resulted in the establishment in Jamaica, of the first TISC in the English-speaking Caribbean. We would like to thank WIPO for the support and training that has been provided thus far, and most recently through access to the Distance Learning Programme facilitated by the WIPO Academy.

WIPO has also been supportive of Jamaica's push to increase the level of national IP awareness, particularly, Jamaica's commitment to green technologies promoting IP issues and policies. It is against that back drop that WIPO indicated its support for JIPO during its annual IP Week activities, which due to the COVID 19 pandemic, were held virtually from 26<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May under the theme "Innovate for a Green Future".

The Webinar series commenced during IP week and included an essay completion which will conclude on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The webinars have increased the profile of JIPO and by extension WIPO as there was wide participation from the Caribbean and North America, with JIPO receiving several requests for information on registration and other presentations. We intend to collaborate with WIPO for future seminars, including the PCT International Cooperation Division and the IP Office Business Solutions Division.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The support of WIPO's Global Issues Sector in the provision of assistance for the 'Building Respect for Intellectual Property' has also been impactful and we would like to report that a draft to enable the provision of a single law that will protect Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Cultural Expressions and Genetic Resources in Jamaica is being reviewed. This draft has benefitted from the ongoing deliberations and text-

based negotiations at the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC).

In this same vein, we wish to emphasize the importance of the work of the IGC and commend the initiative of the Chair Elect and his team on the proposal to have a seminar or meeting of an Expert Group to enable the continuation of the work of the IGC in a format that is cognizant of the challenges of having negotiations at this time.

It is well known that Jamaica attaches great importance to the work which is being undertaken by the WIPO Standing Committee on Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT), relating to the protection of country names. We look forward to the continuation of this work but wish to highlight the challenges in having these discussions in the hybrid format. We anticipate the resumption of face to face meetings and dialogue once the situation with the pandemic normalizes.

In closing, my delegation would like to reiterate its full support for the mandate of the new Director General as well as Jamaica's unwavering commitment to the work of this very important Organization.

**Thank you Mr. Chairman**