

**Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO**

**Fifty-seventh Series of Meetings**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**2 – 11 October 2017**

**Opening Statement of New Zealand**

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates, it is a pleasure to be here at these General Assemblies.

I was appointed to the role of New Zealand Commissioner of Patents, Trade Marks, Designs and Plant Variety Rights in February this year and recently took up the role of Registrar of Geographical Indications.

On behalf of New Zealand I would like to assure you of our support in making these General Assemblies a success.

Mr Chair, New Zealand continues to recognise the critical role intellectual property plays in driving innovation and ultimately productivity and rising standards of living.

We remain focussed on supporting innovation to ensure our economy continues to generate new firms and industries, higher value products and remains internationally competitive and resilient to the inevitable shocks that buffet our shores.

At the heart of this is having an efficient and effective intellectual property regime, which encourages additional innovation and allows ideas to be disseminated widely.

New Zealand is committed to continually improving the efficiency and effectiveness of this regime and has an ambitious programme of work underway.

Mr Chair, over the last year the New Zealand Government has:

- Begun a review of our Copyright Act to ensure that it is fit for purpose in a context of rapidly changing technology.
- Announced it will implement the Marrakesh Treaty to provide greater access to copyrighted works for visually impaired New Zealanders. We hope to make good progress on this over the coming year.
- The New Zealand Government has launched a geographical indications registration regime for wine and spirits. The regime will help promote and protect New Zealand wine

geographical indications and give greater protection for foreign wine and spirit geographical indications in the New Zealand market.

- We have initiated a package of minor reforms to our intellectual property legislation to ensure each regime operates efficiently and effectively.
- And lastly we have started a review of our Plant Variety Rights legislation, which is looking at whether our PVR regime provides adequate incentives for the development and dissemination of new varieties, and how the regime might recognise the interests of Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, in our native flora.

Mr Chair, finding ways for the intellectual property system to protect traditional knowledge and cultural expressions is of particular interest to us. We support the IGC's work and we are committed to progressing meaningful and workable solutions in this forum.

Mr Chair, the Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ) has been in a period of growth which has seen another record filing year for trade mark applications and seen the Office embark a path to double the size of its patent examination team.

In keeping with IPONZ's reputation for its efficient and high quality online services, this year IPONZ expanded its offering by joining the Global Patent Prosecution Highway pilot.

Mr Chair, we wish to express our thanks to WIPO for its continued support and cooperation during 2017. We were delighted to welcome WIPO representatives to our country for another successful round of WIPO Roving Seminars in March.

Finally Mr Chair, New Zealand confirms its willingness to work with WIPO and the Member States to deal with the challenges and opportunities related to the international intellectual property system and to promote innovation and development across all economies.

We look forward to being part of productive and fruitful discussions at these General Assemblies.

Thank you.