

**STATEMENT MADE BY TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON BEHALF
OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AND AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN
STATES (GRULAC) AT THE 51st SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE
ASSEMBLIES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**

Thank you Mr. President,

On behalf of The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I wish to congratulate you Sir on your elevation to the chair. My Group looks forward to working constructively with you throughout these Assemblies and we are certain that under your able leadership and stewardship you will guide us to a successful completion of our work. Mr. President we also wish to congratulate the other officers elected alongside you and we wish to embrace this opportunity to assure them of the GRULAC's support in their endeavours over the course of these deliberations.

Mr. President, my Group wishes to congratulate WIPO for the successful conclusion of the two Diplomatic Conferences over the period 2012 and 2013; namely the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances and the Marrakech Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Visually Impaired and Print Disabled. With respect to the Visually Impaired Treaty, we as the GRULAC family indeed feel heartened as we played the leading role in paving the road to Marrakesh. It is in these circumstances that we wish to pay tribute to the tireless work at the Diplomatic Conference of our previous Coordinator from the Dominican Republic and also the facilitator Mr. Martin Moscoso from Peru who both made tremendous contributions during the negotiations of this historic Treaty.

Mr. President, the GRULAC believes that the conclusion of these two important Treaties is a victory not only for multilateralism within the IP system, but also a victory for dynamism within WIPO and other UN specialized organisations.

Mr. President, please permit me to turn to the proposed convening of a Diplomatic Conference for the adoption of a Design Law Treaty. On this issue, the GRULAC wishes to state from the outset that it recognizes the advantage that this Treaty will have on both developed and developing countries. The GRULAC wishes to state that it can support the negotiation process that will eventually lead to the adoption of this Treaty. However, in order for this Design Law Treaty to have a positive outcome for countries within our region, it is imperative that there be an Article within the instrument which adequately addresses the issue of technical assistance. Once such an Article is negotiated, the users within the region will be able to further enhance their respective capacities and thus benefit greater under the new system.

Mr. President, the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expression (IGC) is a critical Committee for all Members within my Group. So critical it is: the GRULAC in the last IGC held in July tabled a road map proposal for this Committee's future work. That being said, my Group desires to see a mandate which is not only extended but also one which is improved. The GRULAC therefore calls for this Assembly to convene a Diplomatic Conference of the IGC within the next biennium.

As we move towards a Diplomatic Conference in the IGC and in order to garner the support and political will of the process, the GRULAC also calls upon these Assemblies to approve the convening of an Ambassadorial meeting the week before IGC26 in 2014. The aim of this Ambassadorial meeting is to set the political tone of future discussions of the IGCs and not to regurgitate previous expert views which have been previously tried and tested.

Mr. President the procedure adopted with respect to the establishment of WIPO External Offices (EOs) has attracted the undivided attention of the GRULAC. My Group wishes that the discussions at these Assemblies will bring us to a positive conclusion on the issue of the EOs which, unfortunately, could not be finalised during the 21st Session of the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC). GRULAC firmly reiterates the legitimate expectation of our region to be added with the five (5) proposed new offices for the next biennium 2014-2015. The dynamism of Latin America and the Caribbean regarding intellectual property and innovation, which generates 30% of the

demand of the Global IP System, deserves no further delay with respect to the establishment of an office within our region. The GRULAC also calls upon the WIPO General Assembly to establish a Working Group, which is open to all Member States, which will propose to the Secretariat a guiding framework for the establishment of future WIPO External Offices.

Mr. President, please permit me now to turn to the WIPO Academies. The GRULAC takes this opportunity to commend the Secretariat, and the Director of the WIPO Academy, for the work being undertaken within the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The contribution of the Academy is invaluable and its role in shaping our national development strategies is paramount. The GRULAC therefore considers that we should receive the requisite assistance aimed at enhancing the Academies' educational and formative programs in matters pertaining to intellectual property rights (IPRs). The Group therefore recommends that the WIPO Academy continues its work as it steadfastly raises the knowledge bank of IP within the region. Mr. President, many Member States have benefited from advance professional training at the LLM level and distance learning. Accordingly, the more people learn about IP, the easier the IP system will be able to administer and this can redound to respect for IP and enforcement issues.

Mr. President, we applaud WIPO for supporting the 45 adopted recommendations and their systematic implementation. Many can attest to the value of some of the outputs of the CDIP projects such as the pilot project of "Start-up" IP Academies which are well under way in a number of Member States.

Mr. President, notwithstanding the GRULAC's numerous requests made concerning the problems associated with the geographical distribution of the staff in WIPO, the Group is of the view that the proposed Strategy of Human Resources does not adequately resolve this issue. Indeed my Group maintains that nothing has been done to change the human resources and geographic distribution within the organization and as a result the GRULAC continues to be held at an unenviable disadvantage.

The GRULAC also places a high degree of importance on the topic of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as there is a clear link between them and the level

of innovation. That being said, we would like to see a standard programme in WIPO on SMEs and a system put in place which would effectively monitor and strengthen the SME programme over the 2014-2015 biennium.

Furthermore, the GRULAC supports the idea of having a regional coordinator within the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau and as a result would like to see sufficient funds being allocated within WIPO's Budget to accommodate this additional human resource.

Mr. President, in terms of Governance, the GRULAC urges all Groups to further engage in an open ended process to discuss how to better improve the workings and mechanisms in WIPO including but not limited to the appointment and rotation of officers within these Assemblies. Another matter relating to WIPO Governance is the selection process of the Director General. The GRULAC deems this issue as very important and we are confident that the process will be transparent, inclusive and that all Members will have the opportunity to participate. In that sense, the role of the Coordination Committee is essential and our Group, as always, will contribute in a constructive manner.

With respect to Development Expenditure, the GRULAC calls for an effective index to evaluate efforts made by WIPO to bridge the knowledge and technology gap between developed and developing countries.

On IP and Global challenges, the GRULAC understands that in order for this Program to be effective, it must report its activities to Members in an appropriate Committee, such as the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), in order to engage countries in guiding and taking part in its activities.

Mr. President, while we appreciate that the WIPO Forum 2013 can provide useful information to all Member and Observer States, the GRULAC recognises that the list of issues before this august Assembly is quite extensive. With this in mind, the GRULAC wishes to concede for the record that such a side event should not take up the time and also the venue of the substantive debates which will naturally occur during the course of these Assemblies.

Finally Mr. President, on behalf of the GRULAC I grasp this opportunity to wish you the best as you take up this mantle as Chairman of these Assemblies for the next week and a half. We also wish to thank the Director General Dr. Francis Gurry for his vision in shaping this organisation and for his continued commitment in advancing IP in the global setting.

With this Mr. President, I thank you.

23rd September, 2013