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ETHIOPIA.

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General Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at the 54th Session of the World Intellectual Property Organization Assemblies

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ethiopia is happy to see you presiding over these meetings.

The Delegation of Ethiopian congratulates Director General on his unanimous reelection. We welcome the comprehensive report of the Director General and extend our appreciation for the excellent preparation of the Assemblies. We wish the outgoing members of the senior management team in their future endeavors. We are delighted and thankful that the DG has selected H.E. Ambassador Minelik Alemu Getahun as a candidate for the post of Assistant Director General. We firmly believe that his wide experience would be an asset to the Organization.

Madame Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ethiopia associates itself with the statement delivered by Kenya on behalf of the African Group and Benin on behalf of the Least Developing Countries.

The year 2014 has witnessed remarkable changes in the national IP system of Ethiopia. Promulgation of strong legal frame work for the establishment of copy right Collective Management Society, the introduction of copy right royalty collection mechanism, opening of two regional IP offices and digitization of national IP piling system with the help of WIPO are among the major ones. Ethiopia is also speeding up its accession to some of the WIPO administered treaties. Finalization of the formulation of National IP policy and strategy, establishment of TISCs, strengthening the IP start up academy functionality and the assessment of the contribution of the copy right industry to the GDP of the country are some of the projects being run with the support of WIPO.

Ethiopia attaches great importance to the protection of Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore as a country that has a rich biodiversity and diverse culture, traditions and languages with long standing traditions and cultural values.

The protection of Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore at the international level plays a critical role in the promotion and progress of science, technology and arts, reinforced with the identified needs and interests of the socio-economic development of a country, in particular developing and least developing countries. The protection of these resources contributes to the economic and social development of developing countries as well as protect their interests. Ethiopia strongly supports the adoption of a legally binding instrument or instruments to protect TK, TCEs and GRs and fill the protection gap at the international level. We urge the General Assembly to show its resolve by adopting a decision to convene a diplomatic conference in 2015 and requesting the Intergovernmental Committee to conclude the text based negotiations with a view to elaborate an international legally binding instrument.

Madame Chairperson,

We commend Ambassador Fitchen for the excellent manner in which he conducted the consultations on external offices and the draft guiding principles. The African continent has no WIPO representation. The opening of external offices in Africa would enable bridge this gap. It would also promote advance intellectual property interests of Africa and the rest of the world. Africa could also benefit from enhanced facilities for innovation and technology transfer, and benefits from IP tools. We urge this Session of the General Assembly to pass a decision to open two external offices for Africa within the 2014/2015 biennium on a priority basis.

We urge that the implementation the 45 Development Agenda Recommendations should be expedited. The Development Agenda recommendations should remain a guiding principle for implementing technical assistance activities aimed at bridging the IP gap and ensuring the benefit of least developing and developing countries. The mainstreaming of the Development Agenda recommendations should be further strengthened.

Madame Chairperson, in conclusion, we reiterate the firm commitment and support to you and WIPO Secretariat for the success of these Assemblies.

I thank you.