

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

Fifty-sixth Series of Meetings

Geneva, Switzerland

3 – 11 October 2016

Opening Statement of New Zealand

Thank you, Chair.

It is a pleasure to be here at these General Assemblies in Geneva. I would like to assure you of the New Zealand delegation's commitment towards making this meeting a success.

The New Zealand delegation would like to thank the WIPO team for its continued support and cooperation during this past year and acknowledge the Madrid Fellowship which provides mutual benefit for New Zealand and WIPO.

As a small, geographically isolated nation, New Zealand understands the importance of innovation and investment to gain competitive advantage which ultimately delivers high standards of living for our people.

At the heart of this is having an efficient and reliable intellectual property regime, which appropriately balances the interests of rights holders with users.

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

The New Zealand Government is completing the necessary domestic processes to ratify the Trans Pacific Partnership, and a Bill is currently before our Parliament. While most of the provisions of the TPP's intellectual property chapter are consistent with New Zealand's existing intellectual property settings, some changes to our laws are required.

We have recently completed a public consultation on accession to the Marrakesh Treaty, which will require some changes to our Copyright Act. A decision is likely to be made early next year.

New Zealand is committed to finding ways the intellectual property system can protect traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. We have supported the IGC's work since it began and we reiterate that support today. We look forward to working with other member states to seek meaningful and workable solutions.

We are also currently studying how our creative industries use our copyright and designs regimes in the context of a rapidly evolving digital economy. We need to better understand if the regimes strike the right balance between promoting innovation, while providing the protections that incentivise the production of new creative products.

We are working to implement a single trans-Tasman regulatory regime for Australian and New Zealand patent attorneys to provide a modern regulatory regime for this profession.

We are also taking steps to implement legislation on geographical indications for our wines and spirits, with a Bill currently before Parliament.

The Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand operates effective and efficient 100 per cent online services. This year IPONZ commenced participation in WIPO's Digital Access Service and continued as a member of WIPO's ePCT national phase entry pilot group. Both of which further support our goal to deliver more efficient online services to clients. IPONZ also recently redeveloped its website based on client-centred design principles so it now better suits the needs of clients and stakeholders.

We look forward to being part of productive and fruitful discussions during the General Assemblies.

Thank you.