

STATEMENT BY
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BOTSWANA MISSION TO THE UN OFFICE IN GENEVA

57th WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION (WIPO)
SERIES OF ASSEMBLIES

2nd - 11th October 2017
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

**Thank you Chairperson, WIPO Director General,
Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

Botswana aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished delegation of Senegal on behalf of the Africa Group, but would like to make a few remarks from a national perspective.

Our delegation is delighted to work with you once again as Chairperson of the 57th series of meetings of the General Assemblies of WIPO Member States. We also congratulate your successor and his deputies for their appointments.

Allow me to thank the Director General and his staff for the hard work in preparing for these series of meetings of the WIPO Member States.

The Botswana delegation congratulates the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications for the substantive work on the Design Law Treaty. We sincerely hope that this General Assembly will agree to convene a Diplomatic Conference to consider the Design Law Treaty at the end of the first half of 2018, subject to the inclusion of articles on technical support and disclosure.

Our delegation observes with concern that not much progress has been made in the work of the various standing committees of the Organisation. Of particular concern is the slow progress in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC).

The protection of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and geographical indications is an important aspect of intellectual property that requires that minimum international standards of protection be set. Despite the slow progress, in view of the effort, resources and work already put into the work of the IGC, my delegation believes that the IGC should be granted an opportunity to continue its work.

Botswana is also concerned that the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) has not made much progress on the protection of broadcasting organisations, limitations and exceptions for libraries and archives for educational and research institutions, as well as for people with other disabilities.

Chairperson, on the positive side, our delegation is delighted at the growing number of member states becoming party to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired and Print Disabled. We encourage other member states, particularly developing countries, to accede to the Treaty.

Botswana is grateful for the support received from WIPO to implement a pilot project for capacity building to convert printed materials into accessible formats under the Accessible Books Consortium. The outcome of the project will go a long way to promote the conversion of

printed materials into accessible formats for the print disabled - a clear demonstration of the tangible benefits of the Marrakesh Treaty.

We also express our gratitude for the support WIPO extends to Botswana for the development and growth of our intellectual property (IP) system. It is through such support that we are seeing continued growth in the administration of intellectual property laws, and a growing increase in the awareness and uptake of IP by nationals.

Botswana is grateful for the designation as a WIPO Model IP Office for Africa. This project will go a long way in ensuring that Botswana provides world class service to users of the IP system by ensuring easy access to IP services by both Botswana and foreign nationals.

We are on the verge of finalising the National IP Policy, which we are confident will increase the versatility and effectiveness of our IP system, and contribute towards transforming Botswana into a knowledge-based economy, as espoused in our National Vision 2036.

In conclusion Chairperson, the Botswana delegation commits itself to working with other member states to ensure that these General Assemblies make decisions that enable the Organisation to achieve its objectives.

I thank you for your attention.