

**ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES OF  
THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION  
FIFTY EIGHTH SERIES OF MEETINGS**

24 September 2018

GENEVA

**GENERAL STATEMENT - AUSTRALIA**

Australia expresses our thanks and commends the Director General and the Secretariat for their excellent work over the past year and in preparing for the General Assembly. We offer our support to the Chair and Vice Chairs in making these assemblies a great success.

We know from our own experience in Australia that the global economy is increasingly knowledge-based and innovation-driven, with intellectual property supporting economic growth and prosperity for developed, developing and least developed countries alike. WIPO, and we as Member States, have a vital part to play in ensuring that the international IP system can be agile and responsive to current and future challenges and opportunities. Rapid advances in technological development that only existed in the realm of fiction when the Paris Convention was adopted in 1883 – now play a growing role in the international IP system.

At this fifty-eighth series of meetings, we encourage Member States to focus on identifying and progressing our shared interests. Creating greater certainty for businesses and the public across borders will assist trade, investment and technology transfer, and help to promote sustainable development. We urge members to take a constructive approach to take the WIPO agenda forward.

In particular, Australia appreciates the constructive spirit with which Member States have engaged with the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore. We hope Member States can build upon the

good will and progress that has occurred in recent meetings to find common ground. The subjects being discussed are important to the recognition and maintenance of Indigenous Peoples' continuing connection to culture, community and identity that has spanned millennia, including for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples.

Australia maintains its strong support for ongoing improvements to the global IP system, particularly to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and the Madrid Protocol.

Australia welcomes the accessions to the Madrid Protocol made over the past year by Indonesia and most recently, Afghanistan. We are pleased that the membership of the Madrid System has now surpassed over 100 members, with this increase in membership contributing to the ease of doing business in our global economy, as demonstrated by ongoing record growth in the number of applicants using the Madrid System to protect their trade marks internationally.

We are pleased with the achievements that are being realised through the second iteration of the WIPO Australia Funds-in-Trust program; a program aimed at enhancing IP systems, capacities and knowledge in developing and least developed countries. In particular, we are proud to contribute to combating the global health challenges posed by neglected tropical diseases like malaria, by supporting WIPO Re:Search in partnership with the Bio Ventures for Global Health. This partnership offers fellowship placements to scientists from developing countries, enabling these scientists to improve their research skills, develop networks and access IP assets at host institutions; this demonstrates how IP can be used to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer and promote the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

We continue to support the goals of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled and welcome the increase in accessions. This historic treaty, which Australia has ratified and implemented, is an important example of how the international IP community can work together to promote sustainable development, improve educational outcomes and alleviate poverty. The Accessible Books Consortium, which we are honoured to contribute funds to under the WIPO Australia Funds-in-Trust program, is one initiative to help implement the treaty at a practical level and has helped achieve a number of significant WIPO Development Agenda goals including in our own Indo-Pacific region. We encourage other Member States to consider financial support for this important endeavour.

On the occasion of the 2018 World Intellectual Property Day, which was celebrated by the theme *Powering Change: Women in Innovation and Creativity*, Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia, under the banner of 'MIKTA', co-hosted an event at WIPO to highlight women innovators from MIKTA countries. Australia was pleased to showcase examples of Australian women who are improving lives around the world through their inventions.

In closing, Australia expresses its strong and ongoing commitment to working with WIPO and its membership to ensure the international IP system promotes global growth and development, and serves our innovators, creators and businesses, to meet existing needs and be responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.