

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF LESOTHO

Allow me from the onset on behalf of the people of Lesotho to pass our condolences to the people of Vietnam on the passing of their President His Excellency President Tran Dai Quang. We also wish to congratulate the Ambassador of Vietnam as current chair of these assemblies. We are confident that your stewardship will in the end be beneficial to all.

We congratulate the Director General of WIPO Mr. Francis Gurry for his commitment in the furtherance of the objectives of WIPO. We also take cognizance of the issues raised in his report and in particular we commend him for having maintained a Healthy financial position of the organization. We also commend the Secretariat for the documents prepared in an excellent manner.

We have taken note of the challenge of composition of the coordination committee and program of budget and wish to highlight that this committee is important to us and we would like to see the representation increased and that increase reflect the geographical representation of the member states.

The delegation of Lesotho fully supports the statement of the delegation of Morocco on behalf of the African Group. In particular, we are equally concerned that in the area of Normative work there is slow progress. It is highly desirable and important to our country that there be meaningful progress in WIPO Committees. Work in these committees should culminate in holding of diplomatic conferences and conclusion of Treaties. It is of particular importance to us that the Inter-Governmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Folklore (IGCE) be concluded and a binding International Instrument for the protection of TK and TCEs be concluded as well. This should be given the priority it deserves.

All issues posing as hurdles towards adoption of the international instrument should be removed. We hope a diplomatic conference will be convened before the next assemblies.

On behalf of our delegation, we wish to share with these assemblies progress made in the in the area of ratification of International Treaties.

Lesotho on the 30th of April 2018 became the 37th country in the world to join the Marrakesh Treaty for facilitating access to published works for visually

impaired and print disabled persons. This means that, our visually impaired and print-disabled (VIPs) persons will now benefit from increased accesses to the much desired reading materials including access to books from other countries that have joined the Marrakesh Treaty. This humane treaty will definitely have a great impact to the development of our people in general.

We have now reached the implementation stage. In this regard, Lesotho stands ready to work hand in hand with WIPO. The co-operation process has begun. Lesotho is consulting with WIPO and we are soon to resume Lesotho Copyright needs assessment exercise with a view to strengthen copyright in Lesotho with WIPO's assistance. We are thankful for this assistance and we are ready to discuss with WIPO on Copyright Legislative reform so that our copyright Act is aligned with the treaties obligations.

Regarding technical assistance from WIPO we are grateful that WIPO has supported Lesotho with modernization of the office. This support is necessary if we are to effectively and efficiently deliver our mandate of promoting protection of IPRs and serving users in an efficient manner. Our staff in the IP office has been capacitated by WIPOs training programs both short and long term. Regarding long term we have benefited from the MIP program organized jointly by WIPO/ARIPO and Africa University. We are appreciative of WIPO's contribution to creating a critical mass of qualified IP personnel.

We also wish to thank WIPO's cooperating partners in contributing to capacitating our people. In particular we recognize KIPO-WIPO trainings and also WIPO-ARIPO training programs. We also recognize the LDC division within WIPO for facilitating Lesotho's participation in meetings on partnership for innovation and technology capacity building to LDCs .We look forward to participating in the follow up meetings of this meeting.

We would like to see the private sector capacitated as well. Our SMMES would greatly benefit from IP training. In this regard the women entrepreneurs need to be trained as well on the value of IP. Lesotho has an enormous number of women engaged in the crafts business. We request from WIPO training that target the SMMES as we believe that they are the backbone of economies.

The establishment of TICS in Lesotho Institutions still remains a priority to us. We believe the TICS will enhance the work of researchers and lead to more

creativity and development within our country and we request WIPO to give this request a special attention.

In conclusion, we wish to assure WIPO of our unwavering support and wish to maintain the good cooperation enjoyed by WIPO and our country over the years.