

WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY 21 – 24 SEPTEMBER 2020.
STATEMENT BY THE LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES GROUP
COORDINATOR (MALAWI DELEGATION)

Thank you, Mr President,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr President, for your election as the President of the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and express the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group's confidence in your stewardship in guiding our deliberations to fruitful conclusions. Mr President, let me also thank the International Bureau for making efficient organizational arrangements of this Assembly including the timely preparation of the necessary documentation and online communication platforms for our deliberations amidst of this disastrous COVID 19 pandemic. This Assembly, Mr President, is taking place at an important juncture of leadership change in this organization. It is a time we are bidding farewell to Mr Francis Gurry and welcoming Mr Daren Tang to the WIPO community.

Mr President

On behalf of the LDCs group, I would like to express our gratitude to the outgoing WIPO Director General Mr Francis Gurry for his passion and contribution to WIPO and his support to the LDC group over the tenure of his leadership. Under his leadership, the LDC group has been able to participate in WIPO deliberations through support measures that have been accorded to it. The LDC group has also benefited from training, conferences and seminars that have been extended to the LDC group under his leadership to improve their capacity in IP matters. Besides, he has ably led WIPO at a pivotal historical juncture where economies of Developed, Developing and Least Developed Countries, awaken to the phenomenal role of knowledge, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and the Internet of Things in the socio-economic growth and development of these countries. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Francis Gurry for his outstanding work at the helm of WIPO and to wish him success in his future endeavours.

Mr President

In the same vein let me also on behalf the LDCs Group welcome Mr Daren Tang as the new incoming WIPO Director General and we look forward to working with him and at the same time strengthen the cooperation between WIPO and the LDC group. Under the new DG we are looking for a new invigorated future of a modern organization, the convergence of ICT experts that will usher a balanced use of IP in LDCs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The LDC group look forward to continued cooperation with the membership and the secretariat to achieve this.

Mr President.

In my capacity as the coordinator of the LDCs group, I would like to thank Mr Kifle Shenkoru, the former Director of the Division for LDCs for his achievements as a Director of the Division for Least Developed Countries of WIPO. As we bid him farewell, we wish him all the best. In the same vein, we would like to welcome Mr Duong as the new Director of the Division and wish him well in his new role.

Mr President

Let me at this point let the Assembly know that the LDCs require WIPO's assistance towards the promotion and use of IP and Innovation to meet their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As you are aware the group suffers from a digital divide that has also greatly been exposed during this COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, reducing the digital divide in the spirit of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA) will be vital to the socio-economic development in the LDCs.

Mr. President

In this regard, Malawi on behalf of the LDC group would like to express its appreciation to WIPO for its programs for LDCs such as Appropriate Technology, Learning Academy, training activities at national, regional and inter-regional level for organisations and institutions with emphasis on skills development, accessing technical, scientific and patent information for technological capacity building. Let me also mention our appreciation for the Swedish government funded Advanced International Training

Program on Intellectual Property in the global economy. We, therefore, believe that WIPO will always reaffirm its commitment to LDCs in the recovery of the global economy from the pandemic.

Mr President

The COVID 19 pandemic constitutes an extraordinary global public health crisis that has created a pressing need for intensified global cooperation. We hope that the cooperation shown by the Director Generals of the World Health Organisation (WHO), The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) during the presentation of a new edition of the Trilateral Study on access to Medical Technologies and Innovation that took place in July this year, will ensure that the equitable, non-discriminatory access to trade, health and innovation will be available especially for LDCs.

Mr President A few LDCs are graduating soon from the category and others are in their endeavours for graduation. To that end, we would like to urge WIPO to consider designing and planning the delivery of required programs for graduating LDCs to help them address the challenges both before and after graduation. We are ready and willing to engage our efforts in this regard.'

In conclusion, Mr President, my delegation once again wishes you success in your role as President of the Assembly and expresses our readiness to support and work closely with you in this regard.

I thank you!