

COMMUNIQUE OF THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OF THE ARIPO MEMBER & OBSERVER STATES HELD IN KAMPALA, UGANDA FROM 25TH TO 27TH MARCH 2015

The Members of Parliament of the ARIPO Member and Observer States meeting under the auspices of the High Level Meeting for Members Of Parliament of the ARIPO Member States jointly organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Japan Patent Office in collaboration with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and the Government of the Republic of Uganda, in Kampala, Uganda from March 25th to 27th 2015 deliberated on different topics related to the development of the Intellectual Property (IP) System in their respective countries and at ARIPO.

Ten Member States of ARIPO, namely: Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland, The Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe participated. Three ARIPO observer states also attended, namely: Burundi, Ethiopia and Mauritius.

After due deliberations the Members of the Parliament of the ARIPO Member and Observer States agreed as follows:

1. ARIPO should continue to encourage all Member States to ratify and domesticate the relevant Treaties and Protocols, especially the Banjul Protocol on Marks, the Swakopmund Protocol on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expression of Folklore.
2. All ARIPO Member States are urged to ratify or accede to the WIPO Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Persons who are Blind or Otherwise Print Disabled of June 2013 and to the Beijing Treaty on Audio-visual Performances of June 2012 and ensure their domestication and implementation.
3. ARIPO should persuade the observer states and other African states to join the organization in order to boost and consolidate the regional IP system.

4. Members of Parliament for Mauritius and Burundi pledged to engage their Governments to fast track the process of joining ARIPO; while Sao Tome & Principe Members of Parliament pledged to influence their Government to fast track ratification of the Banjul Protocol on Marks.
5. ARIPO should enhance the processes of harmonization of IP laws in the Member States.
6. ARIPO should develop a road map for broad awareness campaigns to educate all stakeholders including policy makers, innovators and creators, researchers, consumers, legislators and the public sector on the value of IP for development.
7. There is a need to train members of the Judiciary and other law enforcement agencies on the importance of protection and enforcement of IP rights in their respective jurisdictions.
8. WIPO and ARIPO to assist Member States to promote access to and utilization of patent information with a view to promote research and development through the establishment of Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs)
9. There is a need to develop adequate legislation and policies to establish a linkage between IP institutions, research institutions and industry.
10. All Member States to place IP in the highest offices and ensure it becomes a priority in their development policies and strategies.
11. WIPO and ARIPO should assist in setting up Parliamentary networks at national and regional level to facilitate dialogue on IP matters.
12. Members of Parliament to use their Parliamentary positions to share experiences and knowledge and advocate for increased funding towards the promotion of IP, research, creativity and innovation.

13. Governments should be encouraged to promote reverse engineering as a tool to fast track innovation for development.
14. Relevant institutions in ARIPO Member States to review education curriculum and mainstream IP as a key component in education at all levels.
15. All Member States to fast track the adoption and implementation of relevant IP enforcement laws in order to curb counterfeiting and piracy.
16. All Member States to promote the use of trademarks, copyright, industrial designs, and geographical indications to add value to local products and promote creativity.
17. WIPO and ARIPO to facilitate translation and interpretation services in future meetings in order to overcome language barriers during the proceedings.

The Members of Parliament of the ARIPO Members and Observer States meeting thanked the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) for organizing the meeting, the Japan Patent Office (JPO) for the financial assistance provided under the Japan Funds in Trust, and the Government of Uganda for hosting the event.

Done on March 27th 2015 at Kampala, Uganda

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