

**Address  
Of  
Dr Hage G. Geingob  
Minister of Trade and Industry of the  
Republic of Namibia  
At the  
World International Property  
Organization**

**22 October 2009**

Mr President  
Excellencies  
Director General and his Staff  
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, allow me to thank WIPO for introducing the innovative approach of bringing everyone on board by introducing the high level ministerial segment as a part of the WIPO Assemblies.

Further, it is my honor to join those who spoke before us to congratulate you for your election to this office. Your election is a testament to your wise leadership, and I have no doubt that you would guide this 47<sup>th</sup> Assembly session to a successful

conclusion. We at the same time would like to thank our outgoing Chairman for his excellent performance during his term of office.

We also express our appreciation to WIPO Secretariat for the excellent preparations, and reception given to us by the Secretariat staff and the Swiss authorities upon our arrival in this beautiful city.

We are mindful of the initiative of the Director General in highlighting the importance of effective protection of international property rights, particularly his

continuing drive to demystify the subject of intellectual property in a way that intellectual property rights within the framework of social, cultural, technological, and economic development are better understood by the industry and the public at large. We thank him for that foresight, and hope that all the member states will extend their support to him in this regard.

Amongst the issues under discussion during this assembly that are of critical importance to us are issues pertaining to Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge,

Traditional Cultural Expressions and Folklore (GRTKF).

We are particularly concerned that Intergovernmental Committee (IGC), in spite of having discussions over the last 14 sessions on the possibility of an instrument for the protection of GRTKF has still nothing to show for concrete action mainly due to the resistance of some member states.

We would like to reiterate our support for the African Group's proposal before the 14th session of the IGC. Our delegation is calling for the extension of the IGC with a

specific mandate to undertake a text-based negotiation on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions.

## **AFP**

The resistance of some of the members has been shown by questions, such as,

“Where is Africa’s contribution to knowledge, innovation, and discovery? Why is it that African States ask funds from us for development agenda despite the fact that Africa has been independent for over half a century?” A history lesson would not be amiss but I will restrain myself and just say

that some of us are coming from countries that have just gained independence after long struggle against occupation, racial hatred, ethnic strife and exclusion from governance and economic activity.

## **Good Governance: National and Multilateral level**

Despite such challenges, we believed that the way forward has to be an inclusive governance holding hands with one another.

Whites in our society were saying where is the contribution of the Blacks etc. They accused the blacks of being lazy. Such ignorant statements abounded all over

Africa. They built apartheid towns such as Johannesburg, Windhoek, Cape Town etc, while dumping blacks in Katutura and Soweto of that era. They ignored the fact that whoever is given the opportunity will succeed in being innovative. Africa's contribution to the world may be forgiven as tolerance and endurance.

## **WEF Report**

Therefore today's success story: Peace, Unity and as can be attested to by the latest World Economic Forum Competitiveness Report, South Africa is number one, Mauritius number two, Botswana is number



three and Namibia number four in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **USA**

In conclusion, I am reminded of another incidence that has more than anecdotal value. During the 60s in the United States when the black power struggle was in progress, a white man who was 34 years old asked one of the leaders of the civil rights movement the following question: “You talk about slavery but I was not there, I never enslaved anybody. I am a doctor and a very successful scientist. What I would like to know is what you have achieved.” You are

just claiming to be the son of a great African Kingdom. What are you today? What have you achieved? As a bystander, I couldn't resist the temptation of participation in this discussion. I recall having said to him, "Brother, give us equal opportunity and you will see that we will perform." That was almost 40 years ago; and today, our black brothers are performing – Africa is free, and the United States has its first African American President, Barack Obama.

It is about inclusivity. It is about equal opportunity

I thank you.