

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

Fifty-fifth Series of Meetings

Geneva, Switzerland

October 3 – 14 October 2015

Opening Statement of New Zealand

Thank you, Chair. New Zealand wishes to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this meeting and looks forward to productive and fruitful discussions under your able leadership.

The New Zealand delegation appreciates the work of the WIPO executive and secretariat in making thorough arrangements for this year's Assemblies.

New Zealand has continued to participate in various WIPO fora and meetings during the past year. We were also pleased to host WIPO officials when we jointly ran two well-supported Roving Seminars in Auckland and Wellington in March. I'd also like to acknowledge the Madrid Fellowship that enables a New Zealand trade mark examiner to gain valuable experience by working in the Madrid Processing Team in Geneva.

I am pleased to report that this year New Zealand has continued to improve its intellectual property framework.

In September 2014 New Zealand's new Patents Act came into force. Since that time New Zealand has been embedding this modernised patents regime. One feature of the new Act is the establishment earlier this year of a Patents Māori Advisory Committee. The Committee will provide advice to the Commissioner of Patents on whether the commercial exploitation of an invention for which a patent has been sought would involve the use of traditional knowledge or of indigenous

flora and fauna in a way that is likely to be contrary to the values of Māori – the indigenous people of New Zealand.

The already-existing Trade Marks Māori Advisory Committee, that has been operating since 2003, has already provided considerable benefit to the trade marks regime. The Patents Māori Advisory Committee first met in March 2015 and we look forward to benefitting similarly from the collective knowledge and experience the committee's members bring to this sensitive and important area.

The New Zealand government has also taken the decision to update and implement legislation providing for the registration of Geographical Indications for wine and spirits. The Geographical Indications (Wines and Spirits) Registration Amendment Bill is due to be introduced into the New Zealand Parliament later this year. The Bill includes a provision that provides that a geographical indication will not be able to be registered if it would be likely to offend a significant section of the community, including Māori.

These initiatives symbolise our commitment to finding ways the intellectual property system can take account of the concerns Māori and many indigenous peoples have expressed with our current systems. At WIPO, the place where Member States have come together to seek meaningful and workable solutions for traditional knowledge-related issues is the IGC. New Zealand has supported the IGC's work since the committee began. Today we reiterate our support for the committee's work, and look forward to working constructively with other Member States on a renewal of the IGC's mandate.

In the last financial year, New Zealand continued to experience increased application filing volumes, notably in relation to trade marks and patents. In relation to trade marks it has been pleasing to see continued positive uptake by New Zealand businesses of the Madrid Protocol system to file trade marks around the world.

The Intellectual Property Office of New Zealand (IPONZ) continues to share its knowledge and experience where this can assist other member states in enhancing their IP operations. We believe this activity delivers mutual benefit to all WIPO members. For example:

- IPONZ was pleased to host five trade mark examiners from the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia for a fortnight in August, to support Malaysia's implementation of the Madrid Protocol. The visit was a good opportunity for IPONZ to develop stronger links with the ASEAN region.
- In May an IPONZ representative visited Cambodia. Through this visit, IPONZ was able to share with ASEAN officials and Cambodian trade mark examiners New Zealand's operational experience with implementing the Madrid Protocol.

Finally, New Zealand confirms its willingness to work with WIPO and the Member States to deal with challenges and opportunities related to the international intellectual property system and to promote innovation and development across all economies.

Thank you.