

Check Against Delivery

**STATEMENT OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND
MINISTER MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
GAMBIA AT THE WIPO 63RD ASSEMBLIES OF MEMBER STATES
HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM THE 14TH – 22ND JULY 2022**

Madam Chair, Director General of WIPO, Honorable Ministers, Excellences, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. I am honoured to attend this important gathering of the 63rd Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO.

The Gambia is pleased to report that it has implemented a number of activities during the year under review in the pursuit of the promotion of Intellectual Property rights. You will recall that the Gambia officially launched its IP Policy and Strategy 2018-2023 in April, 2020 and these activities being implemented are prioritized activities under the plan. These include among other things completion of a new IP Bill. 2022 and office automation.

I must hasten to reiterate the fact that The Gambia as Vice Chair of WIPO Assemblies as well as a member of other WIPO committees will continue to play an active role in the Organization with a view to achieving desirable results. We appreciate the efforts of WIPO Africa Division particularly on their collaboration

with ARIPO in promoting IP in and amongst ARIPO Member States. I must emphasize that The Gambia has greatly benefited from this partnership and I am hopeful that this mutual collaboration will continue grow from strength to strength.

Madam Chair, Your Excellences, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to express our profound thanks to the WIPO Academy for providing capacity building to my staff through the distance learning programs and WIPO sponsored programs, one of which is the Masters in Intellectual Property offered at the Africa University in Zimbabwe. This program is a catalyst in providing the Registrar General's Office with experts in IP and thereby enhancing the effective administration of IP in The Gambia.

In the same vein I would like to commend WIPO on their proposed support and cooperation with the Copyright Office of The Gambia to introduce the WIPO Connect. This program upon commencement and implementation will meaningfully enhance the creative industries in The Gambia.

Currently, two TISCs (Technology Innovation Support Centres) were established in The Gambia and are operational. We intend to establish the third center at the University of The Gambia where university students will use patent information available in the public domain to come up with new innovations.

The workshop on enforcement which is slated to take place in The Gambia this September will greatly make a positive impact in building the capacity of the State Law Officers, Judges, Magistrates, Prosecutors and private legal practitioners on basic IP laws. This I have no doubt will help in the fight against piracy, counterfeit and general IP infringement.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to report that my Ministry is working tirelessly towards the development and promotion of IP in The Gambia through the office of the Registrar General. This is manifested in Cabinet approving the IP Bill 2022, which is now gazetted and will be tabled before the National Assembly for enactment before the end of the year. This Bill captures recent developments in IP and will merge the Industrial Property Office and the Copyright under my Ministry in order to streamline the administration of IP in The Gambia and make it a one-stop-shop.

The Gambia supports in entirety the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the Africa Group. The Gambia is also grateful to the member states and looks forward to your cooperation as we assume the role of vice-chair of this august General Assembly.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the fact that office automation is crucial in the administration of IP. The upgrade of the IP Office IPAS from version 3.4 to the 4.0 which is web-based will significantly enhance the efficiency of the Office in timely examinations, notifications, publications and registrations. I therefore urge WIPO to help in this endeavor as a matter of urgency.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Geneva

14th July, 2022