



## Opening Statement

### OPENING STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

#### 51<sup>st</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION

DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR A. MINTY

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

**Madame President,**

Honorable Ministers,

Director-General,

Excellencies, Permanent Representatives,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the South Africa delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this august body and express my delegation's confidence that under your able leadership, this 51<sup>st</sup> series of meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO will achieve its expected results. The South African delegation would also like to thank the Director-General and the Secretariat for their hard work and efficient organisation of this meeting.

At the outset, South Africa would like to align itself with the statements made by African Group and the Development Agenda Group.

**Madame President,**

South Africa attaches great importance to the work undertaken by WIPO and acknowledges the strides it has taken to address the imbalance between private and public interests. We firmly believe that intellectual property has a significant impact on developing countries and sustainable development, and would like to encourage the organisation to take bolder steps to mainstream the Development Agenda to accelerate the social, cultural and economic development of developing countries.

The adoption of the Development Agenda will forever remain a watershed moment in WIPO's history, and South Africa would like to more work done in this area. South Africa firmly believes that more resources should be allocated to development orientated activities to ensure that all Member States can effectively participate in WIPO programmes and that the WIPO is a member-driven organisation in the true sense of the word.

**Madame President,**

South Africa welcomes the successful hosting of a Diplomatic Conference to adopt a Treaty to *Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities*, and would like to see the spirit of Marrakesh infuse other treaties under negotiations, particularly the IGC. South Africa would also like to see more momentum and progress on texts under negotiation in the IGC with a view to concluding text-based negotiations on all three texts and taking a decision on convening a Diplomatic conference in 2014/2015 biennium. Substantive progress has been made and, this provides a basis for text based negotiations leading to a Diplomatic Conference within the biennium as proposed by the African Group.

We also look forward to engaging substantively on the Treaty on the Protection of Broadcasting Organisations discussed in the SCCR and urge Member States to make progress, with the view to convening a Diplomatic Conference in the near future. South Africa reiterates its support for the use, to the full extent, of flexibilities in the intellectual property system, in particular, exceptions and limitations.

South Africa would also like to take this opportunity of reiterating the need for establishing External Offices in Africa and welcomes and supports the Secretariat's proposal. Africa is widely recognised as the fastest growing region in the world economy and, as such, is in need of capacity building activities and technical assistance to better participate in the world intellectual property system. It is also the only region that does not have an office.

The South African delegation remains convinced that improved governance at WIPO will help to accelerate the process of efficiency and enhance predictability and transparency. We would also welcome equitable geographical and gender representation of WIPO staff and are of the view that greater efforts should be made to create a balance that would be both inclusive and representative of WIPO Member States.

**Madame President,**

In closing, I would like to express South Africa's confidence that this Assemblies of WIPO Member States will make progress towards achieving our common objectives for a balanced international copyright system.

Thank you.