

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF LESOTHO FOR THE FIFTY –SIXTH SERIES OF MEETINGS GENEVA, 3 TO 11 OCTOBER.

The delegation of Lesotho congratulates Ambassador Gabriel Dugue on his election as the chairman of these Assemblies and we are confident that he will steer these assemblies in a direction that will bear fruitful results. We also congratulate the acting vice chair for the appointment.

We have taken note of the Director General's comprehensive report and thank him and his staff for excellent preparation for these Assemblies.

We wish to associate ourselves with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the African group. Having said this, Lesotho would like to proceed with her views on various issues before these assemblies in her national capacity.

We fully support the establishment of two external offices in Africa. The establishing process should be undertaken in this biennium. By so doing, the decision taken in the past assemblies will have been effected.

We congratulate WIPO on the entry into force of the Marrakesh Treaty. The objectives of this treaty that of enabling visually impaired and persons with print disabilities have access to reading material are humane. The Treaty has restored the dignity of its beneficiaries and indeed given them their human rights. They are now in a position to be on equal footing with the rest of the people.

Lesotho has resumed the process of ratification and it is our earnest goal that this process is finalized soonest. We are aware of the pre ratification and post ratification challenges that we have as a country. At this stage, the most critical challenge is that of awareness. In order to achieve ratification timeously we have to engage extensive awareness activities for the key stake holders and the policy makers. We thank WIPO in this regard for supporting Lesotho with regional experts to assume the role of resource persons during a National Marrakesh workshop in February, 2016. We also benefitted from WIPO organized workshop on the Marrakesh and Beijing Treaties in Gaborone, Botswana in July 2016. We plan to hold a workshop for the parliamentarians

as we believe they hold the key to swift ratification of the treaty. We hope that WIPO will continue to support our future awareness activities.

We also take cognizance that more work has to be done in the implementation stage which calls for modernizing of our copy law. Equally important is to put mechanism that will ensure that the beneficiaries of the Treaty have access to reading material and appropriate tools. We have to ensure that there is no cross border hurdles.

WIPO has continued to give us support towards modernization of our IP office. We continue to receive support from the regional expert ear marked by WIPO and also from WIPO'S secretariat. We still have challenges that we need to overcome regarding processing of Madrid applications and others which request WIPO to revisit for the smooth running of the system.

We acknowledge and salute WIPO for activities undertaken with cooperating partners in offering technical support to IP offices. We have benefitted from Japan –funds in trust through the auspices of the African regional intellectual property organization (ARIPO). We have recently also benefitted from the United States Patent and Trademarks Office (USPTO) in the area of copyright. training and also received trainings on IP from Korea,(KIPI & KOICA).

We thank WIPO for long term training namely, the Master's program offered by WIPO and the Africa University. This training has produced the necessary critical mass of IP professionals and upgrading of IP skills to personnel in our office.

The mainstreaming of developmental issues at WIPO'S programs is highly commendable.

In conclusion, we wish to thank the secretariat for excellent arrangements for these Assemblies.