

Sierra Leone Statement to the Fifty-Sixth Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organisation

Your Excellency Ambassador Janis Karklins, Chair, WIPO General Assembly,
Vice Chairs,
Honourable Ministers here present,
Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors,
Director General of WIPO Dr. Curry,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation to this august gathering, I bring, on behalf of my President and the people of Sierra Leone, a very warm felicitation to delegates of Member States and this convocation.

The Sierra Leone delegation joins Delegates from other member States in congratulating Ambassador Karklins on his appointment as Chair of WIPO General Assembly and wish him and his vice chairs every success.

Director General Curry has again proved to this Assembly, that the confidence reposed in him is not misplaced. He has continued since his appointment, to take the administration including the financial status of WIPO to greater heights. For this and more, we congratulate you.

Last year this time, we were just coming out of the woods from the public health emergency that not only took the lives of so many of our most needed professionals, especially in the medical field, families, and other individuals. Sierra Leone like the two other neighbouring countries was for a time completely isolated, causing a great reverse from the strides we had gained towards attaining sustainable development. We are however satisfied that

in addition to the tremendous support of the international community, local physicians were able to leverage local knowledge to develop and implement their own treatment practices that saved many lives and resulted to a hitherto unheard of survival rate from this scourge. A clear sign that there is a capacity to innovate on the continent. We are now working our way through the recovery phase.

Sierra Leone strongly endorses the African Group position as articulated in the statement by Nigeria and reiterate the need for the urgent realization of the two WIPO external offices in Nigeria and Algeria. This is on the critical path to the promotion and protection of innovation on the continent.

On Genetic Resources Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, we are also convinced that the necessity and urgency for "a functional minimum standard international legally binding instrument" cannot be over expressed. The Sierra Leone Delegation also takes this opportunity to congratulate the African Group for its untiring effort and successes achieved so far in progressing the Africa agenda. We additionally align ourselves fully with the statement from the Least Developed Countries group delivered by Bangladesh.

Mr. President, Sierra Leone is happy to report that in furtherance of establishing the Sierra Leone Intellectual Property Office, an Office space has been secured, and the Sierra Leone Intellectual Property Development Plan prepared with the support of WIPO and which is all embracing, will be validated a few weeks from now. We look forward to the continued effort of WIPO in rolling out the activities therein contained.

Mr. President, in line with remarks around “complexity” made by the Director General in his opening statement, Sierra Leone believes that this is the time more than ever, that WIPO should accentuate activities in its agenda for the sustainable benefit of Developing and Least Developed Countries. We are indeed one of those economies that is moving from subsistence to commercial agriculture with all the attendant issues of branding, packaging, labelling, trademarks etc. While recognizing the need for advanced countries to continue to develop IP systems that meet their needs we urge the need for balance such that these systems do not stifle our own development. In supporting the development of our SMEs as engines of growth, we particularly emphasize the urgent need for structures to be in place for the protection and promotion of Geographic Indications, Genetic Resources, plant varieties and more.

Mr President let me conclude by thanking the team at WIPO Secretariat for their considerable effort at organizing this event and their contribution to making the world a better and fairer place for all its citizens.