

## **Statement By the Islamic Republic of The Gambia.**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, first and foremost, I bring you warm greetings from the Government and People of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia. May I also join other delegations in congratulating you on your appointment and wish you a successful tenure.

We also thank the out going chairman for the efficient manner he has steered the affairs of the organisation. Our gratitude is also extended to the Director General of WIPO Dr, Francis Gurry and his team for the preparations towards this General Assemblies.

Mr. Chairman, My delegation associates it self with the statement made by the distinguished delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the Africa Group. We also welcome the proposal to establish WIPO external offices in Nigeria and Algeria and look forward to their existence.

Mr. Chairman, the generation, protection and commercialisation of Intellectual Property is gaining great momentum throughout the world. This is due to the huge economic, social and cultural benefits associated with the protection of Intellectual Property rights. The Gambia is quite aware of

this growing trend and as such we have taken robust steps to give prominence to intellectual property in the country's development agenda.

In a bid to improve and organise the administration and protection of intellectual property rights, plans have been advanced to develop an Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy for The Gambia. This important development is being pursued with support from WIPO. Already, an IP Development Plan has been validated by the stakeholders, and it is envisaged that very shortly, we will sign a memorandum of understanding to kick start the next phase which is the drafting of the IP policy.

To this end we wish to commend the tremendous assistance we continue to receive from the dynamic team at the Africa Bureau.

In addition to these efforts, there have been a number of activities in the form of workshops and seminars over the recent past with a view to increasing the level of awareness about intellectual property in The Gambia. We would like to commend WIPO and other partners for supporting us in organising these activities.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to report that The Gambia has also completed the process of joining the Madrid Protocol for the International Registration of Marks.

The Gambia appreciates the need to comply with international standards and in this light, our Industrial Property Act has been amended to comply with the standard set out in the TRIPS.

The IPAS system for the registration of Trade Marks is still been utilised in our Industrial Property Office and with support from our partners we are poised to making the system more user friendly and efficient.

Additionally, we appreciate the sponsorship provided by WIPO for Gambian candidates to pursue Masters Degree in Intellectual Property in Zimbabwe. This has greatly increased the capacity of the staff of the industrial property office.

Mr Chairman, allow me to also report that The University of The Gambia has also benefitted immensely from WIPO's benevolence through the WIPO Academy that provided relevant text books on IP to enhance the teaching and learning of Intellectual Property.

Mr Chairman, while we recognise and appreciate the great support offered by WIPO please allow me to seize this opportunity to solicit further assistance in upgrading the IPAS System as well as training for staff of the IP office and others involved in the administration and protection of intellectual property be it copy right or industrial property in The Gambia.

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

With these few remarks Mr. Chairman, let me once again reiterate The Gambia's commitment in the deliberations of this 56th Assemblies.

I thank you for your kind attention.