

Statement by Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at the Opening of the 58th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). September 24, 2018. Geneva.

**Mr. President;
Director General Dr Francis Gurry,
Excellences and Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me, at the outset, join the preceding speakers in expressing our deepest condolences on the demise of the President of the friendly country Vietnam. I congratulate you, Mr. President, and other members of the Bureau on your election to guide the work of our Assembly. I also wish to extend our appreciation to all outgoing members of the Bureau for their contributions to the proceedings of the Assembly last year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry, for his comprehensive report continued leadership of the Organization and for putting IP at the centre of the development agenda.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

Intellectual property protection and standard normative settings are no doubt core component to ensure the realization of inclusive and sustainable development goals through substantive and transformative inventions. The speed at which many developing countries, in particular Africa integrate more and more into the global economy calls for a strong and well-developed IP system that benefits their active involvement in global markets and thus help overcome

their development challenges. The support of WIPO, in this regard, is indeed indispensable in contributing to the enhancement of these countries' socio-economic development efforts. It is in this context that Ethiopia welcomes and supports the Memorandum of Understanding signed between WIPO and some intergovernmental organizations in Africa to establish a more enabling coordination system to undertake technical assistance programs for their member states.

In order to ensure international community's commitment of « Leaving no one behind », Ethiopia firmly believes that the 2030 UN Development Agenda needs to be fully implemented in conjunction with and as an integral part of the WIPO's program of work. This is because It is difficult to view development in isolation from the Intellectual Property Rights, in particular from each country's national development context. WIPO's support is therefore critical not only in the application of appropriate technologies for development, but also in helping promote the establishment of a fair and balanced intellectual property regime. It is in this spirit, that Ethiopia welcomes the significant steps undertaken to enhance WIPO's development orientation in the Organization's works.

Mr President,

Ethiopia appreciates WIPO's continued support in developing our national IP strategies and building our human and institutional capacities. Indeed, WIPO has been instrumental in setting up our national IP Academy and in this respect, in the near future the current status will be re-evaluated and need assessment will be conducted for the establishment of the Academy.

With the technical and financial assistance of WIPO, Ethiopia has now reached at the final stage of issuing the national IP policy and strategy, and is in the process of drafting a national law on traditional knowledge. In order to create

appropriate awareness of the policy and strategy among the states holders, a national workshop will be organized this coming November.

Moreover, the recent launching of IPAS and automation, as one of the major projects by WIPO, we believe, helps to enhance the Government's commitment towards modernizing different economic and social sectors in the country. Ethiopia has now become one of the few African country to have launched Online Trademark Database. In this regard, my delegation would like to express its profound appreciation to WIPO and, in particular to the Division for the LDCs for its continued and unreserved support. The implementation of the Solar Coffee Dryer and Aquaculture programs are concrete projects that the division for the LDCs is assisting Ethiopia in addition to the provision of technical training to develop our capacity building. We encourage the Division to further enhance its commitment to support LDCs.

Mr. President,

Ethiopia believes that the establishment of legally binding international instruments is vital to protect genetic resources, traditional cultural expressions and traditional knowledge. In this respect, we would like to encourage the IGC to finalize the consultations and reach a decision to convene a diplomatic conference.

Finally, Mr. President, Ethiopia wishes to take this opportunity to, once again, express our thanks to the Director General of WIPO for his commitment to support member states, in particular LDCs in their efforts to fully use the Organization's appropriate technologies to ensure sustainable development for all.

Thank you.

