

Speech

By

H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda

At the

**Conference for the Adoption of ARIPO Protocol on
Registration and Notification of Copyright and Related
Rights**

27th August, 2021

The Chairman of the ARIPO Administrative Council;

Hon. Ministers from the ARIPO Member States;

His Excellences the Ambassadors of member states of ARIPO to Uganda here present,

The Director General of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO),

The Chairman Board of Directors, Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB)

The Registrar General, Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB)

Hon. Members of Parliament;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome all the distinguished representatives, here present, from the Africa Regional Industrial Property Organisation (ARIPO) Member States to Uganda. I wish you a wonderful stay in Uganda as you attend this important Conference on the **Adoption of the ARIPO Protocol on Voluntary Notification of Copyright and Related Rights**. The African Continent is home to some of the world's greatest cultures, traditions and original compositions of a

diverse nature. We have a very rich heritage which is manifested in our music and musical instruments, dances, oral literature, sports, medicines, pottery, sculptures, paintings, traditional ceremonies etc.

While civilization started in Africa, the biggest problem was that it was never institutionalized and regulated. It remained an individual/tribes skill. The African Chiefs and Kings, who were the rulers of the African states before the conquest of Africa by the imperialists, failed to protect and preserve our rich heritage. They were consumed with tribal rivalry amongst themselves instead of consolidating and safeguarding Africa's unique cultural treasures. The evils of Slave trade and Colonialism caused huge disruptions to Africa's cultural development. Our social fabric was severely torn apart causing great loss of confidence in our creations and innovations. Therefore, both Africa's art and science were stagnated. In some areas, it was completely wiped out and replaced by the European technology, beliefs, systems and practices.

However, just as the physical conquest of Africa did not manage to completely wipe away the African race as it was with, for instance, the Red Indians in America, the total

eradication of the African cultural heritage did not also entirely succeed. A lot of our treasures like our rich languages, songs, paintings etc. which depict the complexity of the civilization which existed in Africa before colonialism have been preserved.

Africa has tremendous cultural and technological potential which can be greatly enhanced through copyright protection. The globalization of the world economy has made knowledge a critical element in attaining socio-economic transformation; but, majority of African countries have not exploited the benefits that intellectual property rights offer to its users, despite considerable improvements to existing knowledge and options for protecting knowledge.

Research into traditional medicine is particularly important in Africa in making good use of our naturally and richly endowed environment. Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America use traditional medicine to help meet some of their primary health care needs. The age-old cures that kept our forefathers disease-free must be given enough attention so that we improve on them and preserve their use. One of our products, Covidex, has been tried among some Covid patients and most of them have fully recovered.

Although the economic philosophy behind copyright protection is to encourage individual effort, there is still limited awareness of its importance. As a result, the rights' holders do not profitably gain from their innovations.

Therefore, this Conference will help the ARIPO member states to build a positive attitude towards copyright; appreciate the benefits of copyright protection and develop stringent enforcement mechanisms to protect Intellectual Property to aid sustainable growth of creative industries in Africa.

In conclusion, I urge you to embrace the ***Protocol on Voluntary Registration and Notification of Copyright and Related Rights***.

I thank you all.