

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ELEVENTH EXTRAORDINARY  
SESSION OF THE ARIPO ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**

**REMARKS OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ARIPO, MR.  
BEMANYA TWEBAZE**

**23-26 August 2021**

**Kampala, Uganda**

The Guest of Honour, Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of  
the Republic of Uganda;

The Deputy Attorney General and Acting Minister of Justice and  
Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Jackson K. Kafuuzi;

The Chairman of the Administrative Council of ARIPO, Honourable  
P. Adelyn Cooper;

The Registrar General of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau,  
Mrs Mercy Kainobwisho

Distinguished Members of the Administrative Council of ARIPO;

Distinguished Representatives of Observer States;

Distinguished Representatives of our Cooperating Partners;

Distinguished Patent and Trademarks Agents and Attorneys;

Members of the Media;

My colleagues from the ARIPO Secretariat;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a singular honour and of great pleasure to welcome you all our distinguished Members of the Administrative Council of ARIPO and all our Guests to the Eleventh Extraordinary Session of the Administrative Council of ARIPO. Indeed this is an extraordinary session as we are living in extraordinary times. The world has been ravaged by a pandemic but still in the face of this exceptional challenge, distinguished Members, you continue to serve our people.

Allow me **Rt. Honourable Prime Minister**, through you to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for hosting this Council meeting and Diplomatic Conference. The Uganda Government's commitment to host the conference has been unwavering despite having to postpone

this meeting twice. We are all pleased to be here to enjoy the hospitality and beauty of Uganda – a country that is truly gifted by nature.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

This session of the Administrative is as a precursor to the Council of Ministers meeting that will adopt a Protocol for the Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights in a Diplomatic Conference from 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021. A Committee of Experts from the Member States of ARIPO has in the last couple of days been negotiating the text of the draft Protocol for which this meeting will have an opportunity to review and approve for consideration by the Diplomatic Conference. I would like to thank all our Experts led by the Chair Madam Dora Makwinja from the Republic of Malawi for the tremendous work they have put in to ensure the text of the document is ready for this meeting.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

The African Regional Intellectual Property Organization is an intergovernmental organization established by the Lusaka Agreement in 1976 and comprising 20 Member States as of today. ARIPO was established to promote harmonization and development of intellectual property laws and to establish common services for the coordination, harmonization and development of the intellectual property activities affecting its Members States among others. ARIPO currently administers four protocols namely the Harare Protocol on patents and industrial designs; Banjul Protocol on trademarks, Swakopmund Protocol on traditional knowledge and Folklore; and the Arusha Protocol on plant varieties.

The draft protocol on copyright and related rights will become the fifth Protocol to be administered by ARIPO, and more critically will close the gap in terms of a regional mechanism for administration of copyright. It will be the first of its kind in Africa.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

Africa is a cradle of creativity and, through this protocol, we hope to harness the potential of our creative industries for our economies’

growth and development. Copyright offers opportunity for securing the value created by our book authors, singers, film makers, computer programmers, to mention a few, in diverse industries including the publishing, music, software, art and crafts, advertising and broadcasting industries, among others.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

The copyright based industries have low barriers of entry. All a person requires is his or her talent or skill to participate in this industry and therefore; the copyright based industries are a major source of employment for especially our youth. A single copyright owner is capable of creating between 4 to 10 jobs along the value chain all the way from the person who produces a copyright work to the person who distributes or broadcasts the work to the public.

Therefore, **Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,** we have an opportunity through this protocol to address some of the contemporary challenges we face in our countries including youth unemployment, low incomes

for our artists, and inability to exploit the export market for our cultural products.

The Africa we want tomorrow depends on what we do today and this protocol is the right step in that direction.

On that note, **Rt. Honourable Prime Minister**, allow me to thank the members of the Administrative Council led by our able Chairperson Hon. Adelyn P. Cooper from the Republic of Liberia, who have braved the challenges of the pandemic and have travelled all the way from their various capitals to Kampala to join hands with your government to establish this protocol. We also welcome those who are joining us virtually from all corners of the globe. These proceedings, **Rt. Honourable Prime Minister** are being streamed live via the internet so that we leave no one behind as we march towards the course of development that we are setting ourselves as Africans.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

In this journey we are setting on for developing our creative industry, we are pleased to be joined by our cooperating partners including the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and the European Union through the EU Intellectual Property office (EUIPO) which sponsored various activities of this Conference through the AfrIPI project. In that regard, I would like to acknowledge Mr Dennis Scheirs, the AfrIPI Team Leader, as well as Mr Gregor Schneider, the AfrIPI Deputy Team Leader. Thank you very much for being with us today.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,** the EUIPO will be officially launching the AfrIPI project on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and more information about the project will be shared at the launch event, but in brief, this project will support our Countries' different goals in the use of IP for development. I take this opportunity to invite you to the launch.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

This extraordinary session will also deal with other administration matters of ARIPO. It is the first council meeting in my new capacity as Director General, and I would like to highlight some of the achievements we have registered so far in my first seven months in Office. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, ARIPO is demonstrating resilience and keeping its operations running and recording remarkable successes in all areas including operations, finances and cooperation.

I would like to single out the accession of the Republic of The Gambia to the Banjul Protocol on Marks on 3 May 2021. This is very significant as applicants can now designate 12 States that are Contracting Parties to the Banjul Protocol. With regard to finances, ARIPO during the first half of the year, has already achieved 57.1% of the overall revenue projected for 2021. This is because even in the midst of pandemic our main sources of revenue mainly the patent and trademark applications grew by 11% and 24% respectively. This has been made possible by the Administrative Council's foresighted



investment in ICT which has kept our offices open and staff working to serve you our Member States.

I will share more details in my report during the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Administrative Council in November this year, but let me take this opportunity to thank you members of the Council for all your support.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister**, distinguished members of the Administrative Council,

Before I take leave of this matter, allow me in a special way to welcome the delegation of one of our esteemed Observer States, Cape Verde, represented by Mrs Ana Paula Spencer, President of the Quality Management and Intellectual Property who is following us virtually. We hope that in a not so distant future we will welcome Cape Verde as the 21<sup>st</sup> Member State of ARIPO. Thank you for joining us Mrs Spencer.

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister, distinguished delegates**,

As I conclude, allow me also to express my deepest appreciation to the Deputy Attorney General and Acting Minister of Justice and

Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Hon Jackson K. Kafuuzi for his tireless efforts in ensuring that Uganda hosts this conference successfully including mobilizing resources, engaging political leadership and his personal presence here to grace this occasion. Hon. Minister Kafuuzi, I wish to say that Ugandan people and indeed the ARIPO family are blessed to have you.

Let me also through you Hon Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, thank the Registrar General, Uganda Registration Services Bureau, Mrs Mercy Kainobwisho and her able team for preparing and organizing this event. I would like to praise her especially for the hospitality accorded to me, my colleagues and all the delegations flying in from various parts of the world. I know the team at URSB as well as other Officials from various Services in the Government spent sleepless nights to ensure this event is successful. Most of us arrived in this country deep in the night but at all times there has been a delegation to receive us. We are being hosted in this beautiful facility and mindful of the times we live in, the standard health procedures are being implemented rigorously which assures us and all

delegates of the safety and security of this conference. Thank you  
Madam Mercy Kainobwiso!

**Rt. Honourable Prime Minister,**

There are many more delegations participating in this conference including Intellectual Property practitioners, many cooperating partners while others are following us virtually. We all would like to thank you for sparing time to grace this event despite your undoubtedly busy schedule. This signifies the commitment of the Republic of Uganda towards use of intellectual property for development for which the future is bright.

Thank you very much **Rt. Honourable Prime Minister.**

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a safe and successful conference.