

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ARIPO DIPLOMATIC
CONFERENCE FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT PROTOCOL
ON VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF COPYRIGHT AND
RELATED RIGHTS**

**SPEECH OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS, HON. MAWINE G. DIGGS, MINISTER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**August 27, 2021
Kampala, Uganda**

The Guest of Honour, Your Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda;

The First Lady of Uganda and Minister of Education and Sports of the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni;

The Attorney General of the Republic of Uganda, Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka;

The Deputy Attorney General and Acting Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda; Hon. Jackson Kafuuzi;

Honourable Ministers of the Government of the Republic of Uganda here present;

Honourable Ministers of the ARIPO Member States present;

My Lord the Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo;

My Lord the Principal Judge, Dr. Justice Flavian Zeija;

Honourable Judges of the Supreme and High Courts of Uganda;

Permanent Secretaries of the Republic of Uganda here present;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Republic of Uganda;
Accredited Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of ARIPO;
The Chairperson of the Administrative Council of ARIPO, Hon. P. Adelyn Cooper,
Director General, Liberia Intellectual Property Office;
The Director General of ARIPO, Mr. Bemanya Twebaze;
Heads of IP Offices and Members of the Administrative Council of ARIPO present;
The Representative of the Director General of the World Intellectual Property
Organization (WIPO);
The Director General of the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), Dr
Denis Loukou Bohoussou;
Distinguished Representatives of Governments of the potential Member States of
ARIPO;
Distinguished Representatives of our Cooperating Partners here present;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocol observed;

I have the pleasure and honour on behalf of the African Regional Intellectual
Property Organization (ARIPO) to welcome you all to the Diplomatic Conference
for the adoption of the ARIPO Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and
Related Rights that is taking place here in this beautiful city of Kampala, Uganda.

May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, for gracing this occasion in person. It is indeed a privilege to all of us to have you, Your Excellency, as our special Guest of Honour.

At the outset, allow me to acknowledge with appreciation the hospitality that has been extended to all the delegates by the Government of the Republic of Uganda and the excellent choice of the venue and all the preparatory work done to ensure a successful outcome of this Conference.

Your Excellency,

At this juncture, I wish to extend my warm welcome and convey my special thanks to the European Union for the sponsorship through the project known as AfrIPI. I would like to also welcome the representatives of other international organizations and institutions that have established good working relations with ARIPO in the development of the intellectual property system in the continent.

I welcome all the representatives of Governments of the Member States who have come to adopt the Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights.

In view of the particular relevance of this Protocol, Copyright has a competitive advantage in Africa, and it is yet to realize its full potential. It is worth stressing that we have in this room today Ministers in charge of Intellectual Property, from ARIPO Member States. This overwhelming attendance shows the importance that our Governments place on Copyright and Related Rights.

I also recognize and acknowledge with gratitude the presence of representatives of Governments of potential Member States. I may have left out some offices and institutions here represented, but this is by no means intentional. Please let it be known that your presence and support is equally recognized, and you are warmly welcome.

Your Excellency,

The Council of Ministers of the ARIPO at its Seventeenth Session held in Charlesville, Margibi County, Republic of Liberia, in November 2019, endorsed the Legal Framework on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights and directed the Secretariat to reformulate the Legal Framework into a Draft Protocol for adoption in a Diplomatic Conference. Let me express again ARIPO's utmost gratitude to the Government of Uganda for having graciously offered to host the Conference.

I was duly informed that the draft Protocol was developed and shared to Member States and cooperating partners, who gave their inputs. The amended draft Protocol incorporated their inputs which were reviewed further by experts from all Member States from 20 to 21 August 2021. It was finally endorsed by the 11th Extraordinary Session of the Administrative Council which took place prior to this Diplomatic Conference from 23 to 26 August 2021.

Let me take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Chairperson of the Administrative Council, Honourable P. Adelyn Cooper as well as the Director General of ARIPO, Mr. Bemanya Twebaze, and his team at the Secretariat for the work done in the preparation of this important Conference.

The Council of Ministers and the Administrative Council of ARIPO closely followed the entire process providing prompt policy direction and guidance whenever necessary.

It is therefore my firm belief that the Protocol is now ready for adoption and signature by the representatives of the Governments of the Member States. As the Honourable Ministers and representatives of Governments deliberate on the Protocol as part of the agenda for the Diplomatic Conference, it is my sincere hope that the Member States shall embrace this Protocol wholeheartedly and adopt it for

the benefit of the Copyright and Related Rights systems and for the development of the Copyright landscape in Africa.

Your Excellency,

I would like to conclude by thanking once again the Government of the Republic of Uganda for hosting this Diplomatic Conference and for the warm hospitality accorded to us thus far. Once again, Your Excellency, we are highly honoured to have you in our midst and it gives us a sense of inspiration and confidence as we strive to put our heads together for the purpose of promoting the Copyright and Related Rights systems in Africa and providing the means for development of Copyright and Related Rights through the adoption of the Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights.

With these few remarks, I thank you for your kind attention!