



DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE FOR THE ADOPTION OF A DRAFT PROTOCOL ON VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION OF COPYRIGHT AND RELATED RIGHTS

WELCOME REMARKS BY REGISTRAR GENERAL- ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Chairman ARIPO Administrative Council
Representatives of Regional and International Organizations
Distinguished Delegates
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), I would like to warmly welcome you all to Kampala, Uganda and specifically to this two-day Extra-Ordinary Administrative Council Session on voluntary registration of copyright and related rights. I know some of you have come from a long distance and we appreciate the effort made to be here today.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all your governments for participating in this conference at such unprecedented period in these trying times. We all know that this conference coincides with an unprecedented time in human history when countries world-over are grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, accordingly a number of measures had to be put in place to ensure the safety of all our delegates, guests and other participants at this conference. In the same breath, I would also like to extend my thanks to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda Police Force, the

Internal Security Organization, the team at URSB for supporting the conference in various capacities.

Ladies and Gentlemen you may recall that the 17th Session of the Council of Ministers of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) that took place in Monrovia, Liberia held from November 21st to 22nd, 2019, considered the draft legal framework on the establishment of a Regional Voluntary Copyright Registration and Notification System and agreed that the Legal Framework should be reformulated into a draft Protocol which would be considered for adoption by the Member States at a Diplomatic Conference. The Council accepted the offer of the Delegation of Uganda to host the Diplomatic Conference in 2020. However, due to the healthcare challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference could not be held but for the perseverance of the members of the administrative council and the ARIPO secretariat, we are holding the conference today. Let us appreciate them.

I would like to commend ARIPO for its continued contribution and support to the development of intellectual property systems at national and regional levels on the continent. As we are all aware, copyright and related rights were added to the mandate of ARIPO in 2002. The adoption of a Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights will therefore help buttress efforts to promote the growth and effective management, administration and enforcement of copyright and related rights in line with ARIPO's mandate. Today, the need for such a protocol cannot be over emphasized especially due to the growing economic potential of the various sectors, sub-sectors and segments that are directly and indirectly related to the copyright industry and their contribution to the GDP of their respective countries and as vehicles for domestic, international and bilateral trade.

The hosting of this conference demonstrates Uganda's commitment in as far as protection of intellectual property rights is concerned. You may wish to note that Uganda has come a long way in regard to protection of intellectual property rights and has achieved tremendous growth in the protection of intellectual property rights, largely due to the commitment of Government and other key stakeholders such as ARIPO to put in place enabling frameworks that have provided a bedrock on which legislative reforms on intellectual property rights are anchored. Uganda has undertaken legal

reforms of its intellectual property regime to conform to international standards for the protection of intellectual property. The Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act 2006 is one such example. Experience has shown us that many people in our countries do not understand copyright issues. It is therefore incumbent upon us as members of ARIPO through our respective national agencies to develop strategies for the continued sensitization of the population and copyright holders on not only the legal aspects of copyright but also on the effective use of copyright for national and regional development.

I would like to highlight here that Uganda has in this regard established the National Intellectual Property Policy that will provide policy direction for government intervention in the creative sector.

In conclusion let me highlight the fact the copyright is but a means towards a business, social or other objective. It is therefore incumbent upon us to consider other factors that impact on the success of the copyright-based industry and here I would like to highlight the role collective management organisations play in the sustainability of the copyright-based industry.

ARIPO recently published a report on collective management organisations in the region and its findings and recommendations should inform our policy and legal intervention towards the development of the copyright-based industry.

Otherwise, I wish you fruitful deliberations and successful negotiations as we promote the use of copyright for development of our region.

Thank You.