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Statement by

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

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Plenary session, General debate

Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Conference,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

At the outset, I would like to extend the congratulations of the World Intellectual Property Organization to you on your appointment as President of the Conference. Under your leadership, WIPO is committed to playing an active and constructive part in these important deliberations as we seek to chart a course for enhanced support for Small Island Developing States in achieving economic growth and sustainable development.

Distinguished Participants,

As is clear in the Program of Action being decided on by this Conference, a key ingredient to building resilient economies in SIDS is developing and strengthening innovation and creativity.

Innovative and creative economies

- build stronger businesses – including small and medium sized enterprises,
- develop markets and create new ones,
- provide opportunities for all, including women entrepreneurs, youth, and indigenous communities,
- strengthen scientific and technological capacities,
- and foster the development and transfer of new technologies needed to address global challenges, including around climate and the environment.

As such, innovation and creativity are an indispensable enabler of our collective ambitions. And intellectual property is vitally important so that SIDS can incentivize the innovation and creativity which underpins resilient, diversified and increasingly productive economies as we work to realize the SDGs.

Intellectual property can capture the genius of the peoples across SIDS, ensuring they benefit from their ideas, build markets at home and abroad, grow their businesses, foster prosperity and strengthen their communities.

I am pleased to report that recently, SIDS have made significant progress in harnessing intellectual property and nurturing their innovation and creativity ecosystems.

For example, according to WIPO data, in the last 10 years, the number of resident patent applications in SIDS has risen by 37%. During the same period, national trademark applications have increased by 42 %.

While innovation is complex and multifaceted, these figures point to tangible progress in SIDS.

Distinguished Participants,

WIPO is pleased to have been working with SIDS to help bolster their innovation and creativity ecosystems based on intellectual property.

Resilient economies are inclusive economies. At WIPO, we are focused on a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone.

We have been assisting SIDS across the world bring the power of intellectual property to everyone in their communities. We have been focused on the important role that partnership with the private sector has to play.

For example, a recent project in Jamaica has provided training to 30 women entrepreneurs in leveraging intellectual property in their businesses in sectors like agribusiness and cosmetics, and others. Based on the success of this pilot, we are now extending this project to Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Women entrepreneurs from Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the Seychelles are involved in an Africa-wide training program for women entrepreneurs in agribusiness.

And we are soon to launch a program to empower women entrepreneurs from indigenous and local communities in Pacific Island Countries, again providing training and mentoring so that they can make use of intellectual property in their businesses.

WIPO has also been assisting SIDS benefit from their rich natural bounty and products for which they are famous.

We have initiated a groundbreaking project in Antigua and Barbuda, focusing on creating a collective mark for Barbuda logwood honey and Antigua multifloral honey.

In the Pacific, this year WIPO is launching projects to help Tonga and Vanuatu develop geographical indications for “Kava” products branding. And we are working with the Pacific Islands Forum and Pacific countries to develop a regional kava development strategy and geographical indication.

Our focus in WIPO is on supporting SIDS in sectors of need.

We are assisting the Dominican Republic in identifying the opportunities for using intellectual property in branding culinary traditions (food and beverages) to promote gastronomic tourism.

This month, we organized a webinar for SIDS in Africa - Unlocking Intellectual Property Below Water. This event explored how intellectual property can promote innovation, help protect biodiversity and promote sustainable practices in the Blue Economy.

In Trinidad and Tobago, WIPO recently completed a project on managing intellectual property assets for the Carnival Museum, helping harness and preserve cultural heritage for future generations.

At the same time, in WIPO, we are conscious of the vital importance which SIDS place on addressing challenges - particularly around the climate - and securing their future.

The WIPO GREEN technology platform connects providers and seekers of needed green technologies, fostering collaboration and accelerating green technology diffusion. We are now preparing an acceleration project to launch next year in the Pacific to help countries identify innovation and technology-based solutions responding to impacts of climate change.

WIPO has also organized specific initiatives to facilitate technology diffusion in mind. For example, our recent project with countries in the Caribbean focused on intellectual property for technology transfer and commercialization has provided a regional platform for identifying critical need areas for plastic waste management, for sharing research findings from Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and bridging the gap between academia and the business sector.

Distinguished Participants,

Activities and time limited projects are only one part of our response to the needs of SIDS. Without the people with the skills and knowledge required to identify and use intellectual property, its true value cannot be realized.

Through the WIPO Academy, we are helping spread these vital skills and knowledge through communities in SIDS. For example, in 2023 and 2024, 1,688 women, men and youth in SIDS benefitted from distance learning courses, out of which 238 received scholarships. The WIPO Academy continues to develop courses in specific areas which may be of particular interest to SIDS. For example, a course on intellectual property in the Blue Economy for the Caribbean region is now being developed.

Another key ingredient of thriving innovation and creativity ecosystems is the architecture that underpins them.

At the policy level, WIPO provides targeted and needs-based advice on the development of national intellectual property strategies. These connect intellectual property with broader national policy settings and bring in the many actors in ecosystems within government and in the private sector, so that the power of intellectual property can be fully realized. WIPO is

currently working with Antigua and Barbuda, Cabo Verde, the Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe and Tonga on such strategies.

WIPO also supports national intellectual property offices in SIDS, build the systems, processes and databases required to participate effectively in the global IP system.

We help SIDS use the Global Intellectual Property Systems administered by WIPO – in patents, trademarks, designs, arbitration and mediation, and appellations of origin and geographical indications – which help protect intellectual property and access markets around the world.

WIPO provides advice to SIDS on their legislation so that they can meet national commitments, build their intellectual property ecosystem and, again, make the most of what intellectual property can offer, both within their national economies and within the global trading system.

We help the forging of communities of practice and learning among SIDS, through supporting regional fora bringing together intellectual property offices and senior policy makers in the Caribbean, the Pacific and Africa.

Distinguished Participants,

This Conference presents an opportunity for us all to step up our support for SIDS as they seek to build resilient economies, foster safe, healthy, and prosperous societies, and secure their future while addressing the climate and other challenges they face. And, as I have stated, innovation and creativity incentivized by intellectual property has a vital role to play if we are to realize this ambition.

WIPO is committed to continuing and further enhancing its cooperation with and support for SIDS to achieve the aims of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

To this end, in WIPO, we have recently created a new Division and associated Unit responsible for the coordination of the Organization's many strands of assistance for SIDS, to ensure we maximize the impact of our offerings for you.

We are also listening carefully.

This Conference has provided many rights insights into the needs and perspectives of SIDS. We take these back with us and will integrate these into a reinvigorated program of support, action and ever closer collaboration with SIDS as we work with Member States and stakeholders so that, together, we can realize the full potential of intellectual property as a powerful tool for growth and sustainable development for all.

Thank you very much.