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African Union Commission Statement
at the
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
General Assembly

Geneva

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The Chair, WIPO General Assembly,
The Director General, WIPO,
Excellencies the Ambassadors
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Madam Chair,

It is an honor for me to take the floor here in front of a panel of prominent figures of the area of intellectual property, on behalf of my colleague, Martial De-Paul IKOUNGA, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, who could not attend the event in person.

And it is with great pleasure that I will deliver the message he would have loved to deliver himself.

Permit me from the on-set to convey sincere greetings from Mrs. **Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission (AUC), to Mr. **Francis Gurry**, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

We have attentively followed the presentation of the Director General's 2015 Report to the WIPO Assemblies and I wish to congratulate the Director General and the staff of WIPO for the excellent work carried out in that period.

Chair,

I see that you have a heavy agenda ahead of you, may I take this opportunity to wish you fruitful deliberations in the days to come.

Chair,

In recent years there has been recognition by the leaders in Africa of the critical role that Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) can play if there should be a transformation

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of the African Economies. This aspect is clearly spelt out in the African Union *Agenda 2063* which underscores the importance of STI for Africa's socioeconomic development and growth. The *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024* (STISA-2024) provides a framework towards the realization of those goals for the peoples of the continent. In fact the Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has STI as one of its pillars, where Africa is committing to creating an enabling environment for innovation through strengthening the financial and regulatory environment to support innovation culture; strengthening and creating, where needed, African property rights institutions; protecting intellectual property and industrial rights; increasing funding for science and technology research and innovation; and fostering collaboration among African countries on science and technology for development.

This is the Africa position which is reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in New York in September this year.

And it is in this same spirit that the Heads of State and Government Summit of the African Union decided to create a Pan African Intellectual Property Organization: **PAIPO** whose statutes have been submitted to the next conferences of African Ministers in charge of Justice scheduled to take place first week of November.

We note that WIPO under the leadership of Mr. **Francis Gurry** indeed, has achieved a lot in Africa, through its programs in promoting the effective use of the intellectual property for socio- economic, scientific technological and cultural development. We have seen in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2015 Report , the positive trends in Africa, with the number of low-income economies cited as innovation achievers, performing increasingly well at levels previously reserved for the lower-middle-income group. In sub-Saharan Africa Rwanda (94th), Mozambique (95th) and Malawi (98th) are now performing like the middle-income economies. In addition, Kenya, Mali, Burkina Faso and Uganda are generally outperforming other economies at their level of development. And of course toping the rank in Africa is Mauritius, followed by South

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Africa. These are all positive signs of having enabling policy frameworks which allow for using innovation for development.

Chair

That is why, today, it gives me great pleasure to announce that, for the first time the AU is cooperating with WIPO in organizing the ***Africa Ministerial Conference 2015: IP for an Emerging Africa*** a platform that will bring together Ministers AU and WIPO member states in the African region Ministers responsible for innovation, science and technology, trade and industry, intellectual property, agriculture, culture and communication policies and many other senior representatives from the African Regional Economic Commissions, international IP experts, intergovernmental organizations, regional IP institutions, universities and research and development institutions, entrepreneurs and the private sector.

Chair

Permit me also to convey the AU's deep appreciation to the other organizers, first of all; H.E. Mr **Macky SALL**, the President of the Republic of Senegal, and people of Senegal for hosting this important event then Government of Japan, for their commitment in promoting Intellectual Property in Africa and the financial support in making this possible.

Chair

Before I conclude, let me touch on one of Africa's greatest assets – its wealth in human resources. The African Population is estimated to be more than a billion people where over 60 % are young men and women under the age of 35, and the majority of those are faced with the challenge of unemployment, underemployment, and lack of skills, relevant education, and access to capital etc. That is why we have decided to organize a one day workshop prior to the Ministerial Conference, targeting young African creators, innovators and inventors, entrepreneurs with the objective of providing them with a platform to listen and exchange views with international/regional experts about the IP system On how

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- (i) to use it to protect, develop and commercialize their innovations
- (ii) to encourage and stimulate further creativity and innovation and
- (iii) to encourage the SMEs to use it to enhance their business competitiveness.

The participants of this workshop shall present their report to the Ministerial Conference.

Chair

It is our belief that this Conference should not just end in “business as usual” but rather it should come up with clear directions on how the continent shall use the IP system for the economic transformation of their economies and wealth creation by capitalizing on the opportunities afforded by the knowledge economy.

Working within an all-inclusive framework for a better future for the people based on the innovative and creative spirit of its peoples.

Thank you

Merci beaucoup