

ARIPO Director General's Remarks High Level Meeting on the Arusha Protocol

[Technical Segment]

November 1, 2022

- The CEO of BRELA, Mr Godfrey Simango Nyaisa,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and privilege for me on behalf of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and indeed on my own behalf to address this meeting on the occasion of the High-Level Mission of the Director General of ARIPO to the United Republic of Tanzania on the Arusha Protocol. ARIPO remains committed to working with its Member States and other equally important stakeholders in ensuring that it fulfills the objectives its establishment was intended for in tandem with the aspirations of the African continent.

Allow me, therefore, to express ARIPO's sincere gratitude to the Chief Executive Officer of the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) for the commendable support BRELA has always offered to ARIPO. I further note with delight that BRELA is always in constant engagement with ARIPO in ensuring that the Organization becomes impactful by way of responding to not only regional challenges but also emerging opportunities that could empower our respective constituents. We therefore count on you CEO for your leadership continues to bring the necessary impetus.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The population of Africa is expected to double to 2.5 billion by year 2050. This will not only exert pressure on the ever-dwindling arable land, but it will also mean more food resources are needed to feed the exploding population. Yet, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Africa has an immense potential in the sense that the continent operates at 66% below the global average of cereal production. At optimum, Africa does not have to be a net recipient of food aid that it currently is. It is from this premise that the Member States of ARIPO guided the Organization to come up with Arusha Protocol as a PVP system to counteract this impending challenge.

Arusha Protocol provides a *sui generis* form of Intellectual Property protection of new varieties of plants, which has been specifically tailored for Africa and adapted for the process of plant breeding. It is developed with the aim of encouraging breeders to develop new varieties of plants. The Protocol aims also to achieve recognition of the rights of plant breeders on a regional basis. It is always correctly reasoned that as Africa, we are capable to solve our own problems, and Arusha Protocol is a robust avenue through which we can achieve this in the context of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

It is critical to be always aware that in talking about plant variety protection, we are in reference to the value chain that starts with breeders, to farmers and growers and ultimately to the ordinary consumer. Within this value chain, there are issues to deal with such as yield, profitability, resistance to pest and diseases, stress tolerance, harvestability, crop quality, input efficiency, variety diversity, new markets, among others. Additionally, reduced food costs, efficient land use and issues of nutritional quality and taste, are relevant considerations that are appropriately captured within the PVP system.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to highlight the importance attaching the protection of new varieties of plants not only to the development of agriculture in our region but also for safeguarding the interests of breeders. Ordinarily, these issues come with international obligations by way of accessions and ratifications. As policymakers, it is incumbent upon us to take such decisions, unpopular as they might be for some sections of humanity, for the greater good of society.

For instance, Arusha Protocol addresses 6 goals out of the 17 SDGs. These are goals 1, 2, 9, 12, 15 and 17. The Protocol in general is thus so comprehensive as it goes way beyond its immediately perceptible objective. It is my belief that even at national level the system finds its relevance in addressing the most basic issues faced by ordinary citizens. It is on this basis that we are here to demonstrate this value of Arusha Protocol and say let us join hands to ensure that the Protocol delivers in its intended objectives.

Finally, as I conclude, I wish to reiterate my sincere gratitude to BRELA as it continues to be a leading proponent for the success of ARIPO for the progress of the region and Africa. As such, we are always keen to deepen our bilateral relations in furtherance of the issues relating to development assistance and capacity-building activities in the IP areas of strategic importance to social, environmental and economic development.

With these few remarks distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful discussions.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ATTENTION