

Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO
September 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

This is my last official statement at WIPO, and I will soon be returning with great anticipation to my grassroots, to a civilization that dates back to the 4th and 5th millennium BC.

Before I leave, I wish to express my gratitude to you, the Member States, for your support and unfailing commitment to WIPO. I sincerely hope that this partnership will continue in the years to come.

It has been a privilege and an honor for me to serve as Director General of this Organization which has benefited so much from the active collaboration and involvement of its Member States. My interactions with you over the past years have been warm, cordial and respectful. I shall cherish the memories of these interactions.

It is a privilege and an honor to work with you, Ambassador Martin Uhomoibhi, both in your capacity as Chair of the General Assembly as well as Permanent Representative of your distinguished country. You have brought with you all the desired qualities of a diplomat. You have been a bridge builder and a seeker of consensus, and have proved yourself to be a worthy and exemplary Chair of the General Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude and appreciation to the staff of this Organization. I wish to say an immense thank you to all of you. Without your dedication, support and hard work, all that has been achieved in this Organization over the past years would not have been possible. The energy, high quality and professionalism you have demonstrated over the years have been of immeasurable value in furthering our common goals in the IP field.

To my successor, Francis Gurry, I wish to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations on his appointment today, which takes place later this morning. I salute his commitment and dedication to this Organization which span more than two decades. It is my conviction that in his capable and experienced hands, the Organization will continue to achieve notable results in the years to come. The many positions of responsibility that he has held have no doubt prepared him to assume the leadership of WIPO.

And to all those who have supported me during my tenure of office, I say a big thank you. To all those who did not support me, I say an even bigger thank you. You have helped to forge my experience and my determination to continue to work for consensus and political good will as much as is humanly possible.

Upon taking up my term of office, I had a vision to open up the Organization and to make it increasingly relevant to users and beneficiaries of the IP system as well as the public at large. Central to this vision was the need to forge close cooperation with Member States. The concrete results of that vision are clear for all to see, and I think we can all be proud of how far WIPO has come in the past decade.

Several significant achievements have been recorded during the past decade, and mentioning them all here is not possible. An Annex has been attached to this statement in which some of these achievements have been outlined.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to convey my appreciation and thanks to all Member States for their support during my tenure of office. I also wish to thank the other constituencies of WIPO, namely the users of the IP system – industry groups and civil society members and NGOs – for their fruitful contributions during these years. I sincerely hope that they will extend that same level of cooperation to my successor.

Thank you all for your attention.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

WIPO – 1997 to 2008

New Initiatives, Highlights and Trends

Since 1997, WIPO has been transformed, both in the range and depth of its core substance and in its organizational and physical infrastructure.

In managing this considerable expansion and change, the Organization's goal has been a strengthened and expanded international intellectual property (IP) system that is inclusive and well-grounded; that facilitates universal access; and that provides a platform for all those who wish to have their voices heard in the debate on its future development.

The following schema indicates the key developments in the main areas of the Organization's activities during this period.

STRENGTHENED NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Continued development of a strong, efficient, stable framework of international IP norms to assist Member States in protecting and commercializing their IP assets, specifically
 - entry into force of the so-called WIPO Internet treaties – the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty WPPT (2002)
 - adoption of the
 - Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks (2006)
 - Patent Law Treaty (2000)
 - Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement (1999)
 - increased membership of WIPO treaties
 - WIPO Convention +19
 - Paris Convention +30
 - Berne Convention +37
 - PCT +45
 - Madrid Protocol +54

ENHANCED SERVICES

- Global protection services (patents, marks and industrial designs) rendered simpler and more efficient through in-house automation and online filing
 - strong increase in the use, and reduction of the cost, of these more user-friendly and accessible services

