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**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE
54TH GENERAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANISATION**

DELIVERED BY HONOURABLE FORTUNE CHASI

DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

Madam Chairperson,

Honourable Ministers,

Director General

Excellences, Permanent Representatives,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Zimbabwean delegation, I would like to express my delegation's confidence that, under your able leadership and stewardship, this year's WIPO General Assembly will achieve its ultimate objectives and mandate. You can certainly count of Zimbabwe's full support and cooperation as we navigate the Agenda items before us. My delegation also extends its profound thanks to the Director General, Francis Gurry, and his Secretariat for the hard work, tremendous and efficient preparations for this year's General Assembly. My delegation also takes this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report on the activities undertaken by the organisation since the last assemblies meeting in 2013

From the outset, Zimbabwe wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegation of Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group and the sentiments and donations by China towards the Development Agenda. We believe the donation is a key step and gesture towards this very important and key area. In this connection, in view of the

detailed statement by Kenya on behalf of the African Group, I will simply reiterate those sentiments rather than repeat them. We wish though to make emphasise the need to move with speed to conclude all the treaties of interest to developing countries.

Madam Chair,

Delegations may recall that the subject of external offices was a highly contested issue during the last Assemblies. Zimbabwe reaffirms WIPO's central role in ensuring that all countries are able to benefit from the use of IP for economic, social and cultural development. The establishment of External Offices in Africa would also contribute to the strengthening of Africa's commitments in the field of IP. Zimbabwe therefore looks forward to the approval of this initiative and the commitment of the requisite financial resources for the establishment of these offices.

Madam Chair,

Zimbabwe continues to value the technical assistance provided by WIPO to various IP institutions in Zimbabwe. We, in particular, appreciate WIPO's steadfast support for the Regional Masters Programme in Intellectual Property that Zimbabwe has the honour to host at Africa University. This programme continues to command international respect and demand for it on the entire African continent continues to rise. We therefore count on WIPO's continued support as the programme is pivotal for the advancement of IP education and innovation in Africa. We, therefore, call for increased resources to the WIPO Academy to enable it to fulfil its mandate in the area of training as this will help build the much needed capacities of the developing countries.

Madam President,

I am pleased to inform this august House that Zimbabwe will soon join the Madrid family. We have initiated the accession process for the domestication of the provisions of the Madrid Protocol.

My delegation looks forward to contributing to upcoming discussions on specific agenda items before the Assembly.

I thank you