

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

Fifty-Fourth Series of Meetings

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Opening Statement of New Zealand

New Zealand would like to thank the Chair as well as the Director General and his Secretariat for their excellent work in preparing for these Assemblies.

New Zealand continues to participate in WIPO meetings, including the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, in the Madrid Protocol meetings and in the Patent Cooperation Treaty meetings.

New Zealand's commitment to modernising its intellectual property law has taken a significant step forward. The Patents Act 2013 fully commenced on 13 September 2014. This new legislation brings New Zealand's patent regime in line with our international trading partners, aligns our patent laws more closely with international best practice, and will boost innovation and help create a more productive and competitive economy.

This new patent regime introduces examination for inventive step and absolute novelty in line with accepted international standards. It will go some way towards addressing Māori concerns relating to the granting of patents for inventions derived from indigenous plants and animals or from Māori traditional knowledge by establishing a Māori Advisory Committee to advise the Commissioner of Patents. It also requires applicants and their appointed agents to file and correspond with the Intellectual Property Office, known as IPONZ, by electronic communications.

In advance of updating our patent law, IPONZ launched a modern case management facility across all IP divisions. Notably, in the last year – 99.8 % of IP applications made to IPONZ have been filed electronically. Providing this facility has reduced the compliance effort for often time poor small to medium enterprises in New Zealand. It also assists IPONZ in maintaining high quality public information and examination outcomes supported by ISO 9001 certified operational processes.

In the last financial year, New Zealand has seen a 10% increase in the number of trade mark applications filed. Accounting for much of this increase was New Zealand's accession to the Madrid Protocol in December 2012 and the improvement in the global economy. It has been

pleasing to see good uptake by New Zealand businesses using the Madrid Protocol system to file trade marks around the world. New Zealand has also seen a 13% increase in the number of design applications filed. Conversely, there has been a decrease in patent standard applications and national phase entries.

New Zealand has also been active in sharing its knowledge and experience with other countries over the last year. New Zealand wishes to thank WIPO for the opportunity to share our Madrid Protocol accession and operational implementation experiences with some of its ASEAN colleagues. IPONZ hosted a week long study visit from representative of Cambodia, Laos PDR and Indonesia. We also wish to thank the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines for participating in the discussions and roadmap workshop sessions. IPONZ will continue to support as appropriate our ASEAN colleagues as they prepare to accede to the Madrid Protocol through the activities of the WIPO and the ASEAN Australia New Zealand Free Trade Intellectual Property Committee.

As part of the New Zealand Government's *Business Growth Agenda*, IPONZ is working with a number of government and private-sector agencies to improve the intellectual property information available to New Zealand businesses. This initiative will provide businesses with better information, resources and tools to improve their understanding of intellectual property and provide more information about how to commercialise intellectual property.

New Zealand also continues to work with Australia on the Single Economic Market initiatives that will benefit applicants seeking patent protection in Australia and New Zealand.

Thank you again, Chair, and we look forward to a constructive meeting of the General Assemblies.