

# **COUNTRY STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**Statement on behalf of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
at the 49<sup>th</sup> Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the  
Member States of WIPO including the PCT Union Assembly**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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**World Intellectual Property Organization Headquarters  
Geneva, Switzerland  
(September 26 – October 5, 2011)**

**STATEMENT OF THE HONOURABLE PRAKASH RAMADHAR,  
MINISTER OF LEGAL AFFAIRS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AT  
THE FORTY NINTH SERIES OF MEETINGS OF THE  
ASSEMBLIES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE  
WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION,  
TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2011**

Mr. President,

The Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago joins other Delegations in welcoming you to the Presidency of the Assemblies and assures you of its full cooperation. I also offer congratulations to the other members of the Bureau who will supplement your efforts to ensure the effective governance of this Conference, for which, of course, you have our best wishes and complete support.

Mr. President, in the new economy of today intellectual property is quite simply a ubiquitous feature of human endeavour and excellence. This is true not only in the world of business and scientific achievement, but even in the world of sport, where premier world athletes have become more keenly aware of the commercial potential of protecting their rights and thus, of the critical role IP must play in translating their athletic success into sustainable financial rewards.

At last year's Assembly, I gave a number of undertakings germane to the enhancement of the IP system in Trinidad and Tobago, consistent with the WIPO development agenda. One such undertaking was that as a Government, we would take a proactive role in

integrating IP into the sports sector. Mr. President, in furtherance of that goal, we established a Committee to make recommendations for the development and implementation of an intellectual property management capacity within the sports industry. This will empower the industry to leverage its intellectual property, intangible assets as well as its image assets for the benefit of the athletes themselves and for the growth and development of this dimension of the sports industry.

In framing national policy in IP such that it can effectively energize the growth of specific sectors, we are careful to ensure that policy coverage is directional, in relation to both acknowledged and emerging sources

of competitiveness. Thus, Business and research have not been overlooked and, Mr. President, let me at this juncture thank WIPO for convening a Workshop on Technology Licensing earlier this year. The workshop suited Trinidad and Tobago's purposes especially well, given our current stage of evolution in IP, as we have now entered the phase of using and managing the IP system to incentivize investment for sustainable national development.

I also wish to commend WIPO for its assistance with the IP Academy project, which was taken to a higher level in June of this year through the mounting of a Needs Assessment Mission. The IP Academy will be a critical node of knowledge production and sharing in

what we anticipate will be a chain of lifelong learning in IP in Trinidad and Tobago. In the interim, the Intellectual Property Office, in collaboration with the Hugh Wooding Law School, organizes a special IP Clinic for law students, while conducting an outreach programme at the secondary school level. Discussions have also been launched with the Ministry of Education for the formal introduction Intellectual Property into school curricula at various levels. All this, Mr. Chairman, by way not only of building national awareness, but more critically, to engender the strategic enhancement of national capability in IP, in order to create new wealth streams to secure Trinidad and Tobago's future.

Mr. President, considering the range of national IP initiatives in the Caribbean and moreover, the heterogenous character of IP development in our region, it is anticipated that there will be pronounced growth in the demand, both quantitatively and qualitatively, for servicing the region's needs in optimizing its IP potential and infrastructure. Trinidad and Tobago attaches great importance to this and, in that regard, values very deeply the support and cooperation it has received and continues to receive from the International Bureau, in the broader context of what we hope will be sustained initiatives at WIPO to address, more purposively and effectively, the peculiar needs and challenges of the Caribbean. We look

forward, with a sense of mission, to the maturing of those initiatives.

Mr. President, unarguably, tremendous progress has been made in the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (GRTKF). Trinidad and Tobago expresses its deep appreciation to all members that contributed to that process and in particular, to those offering support and encouragement for its various proposals. In that regard, we urge this Assembly to renew the mandate of the IGC and with the necessary accompanying resources to permit the completion of its work.

Like any institution in the throes of transformation, Mr. President, we must take stock of where we are in relation to the destination for which the compass is set. This is the rationale behind the establishment of a Committee to Review the Legislative Framework for the Management of Intellectual Property Rights in Trinidad and Tobago. All of the initiatives taken by my Government will feed into that Committee as a sort of clearing house for putting forward recommendations for appropriate institutional arrangements to move the country forward on a knowledge-based, IP-centric footing. I wish to sincerely thank WIPO for all its support and constant willing engagement on our numerous initiatives. I advise , in this regard that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is actively considering

accession to the Hague Agreement and the Madrid Protocol.

Let me end by congratulating the Director General for marshalling the Organization at this time of great challenge in pressing ahead with the mandate of WIPO. He has our unending support in his efforts and we look forward to the continued advancement of IP under his tenure. We trust that his vision and strategic leadership of this Organization will heighten further its response to the growing interest among member states in the strategic and productive use of the IP system and its information. Mr. President, we therefore look forward to the successful conclusion of these discussions, which

we are confident is assured, under your astute guidance and leadership.

Mr. President, I thank you.