



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, Permanent Observer of the
Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 51th Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies
Geneva, 24 September 2013

Madam President,

The Delegation of the Holy See would like to congratulate you on your election to chair the General Assembly. We welcome the two new vice-chairs as well and thank the outgoing chair and vice-chair for all the hard work over the past year. My Delegation is confident that under your leadership we will be able to reach a positive outcome during this session, as we did in the previous ones.

Allow me also to express our appreciation to the Director General and his staff for the enormous efforts over the last year in maintaining the Organization's rightful place as the global IP authority. After the Beijing momentum, we now have the Marrakech spirit that has led to a new treaty, the *Marrakech Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled*, and that should stimulate further creative collaboration.

In fact, over the last year our Organization has shown the way forward to the International Community. The process of negotiations and the political will to reach out to visually impaired people have provided a lesson that enables us to look at the future with greater confidence. The lesson is a deep sense of human solidarity with victims of disabilities and the acceptance of their full participation in the life of society. As new priorities are debated for the post-2015 development concerns, placing the needier persons at the centre of plans and programs will ensure the right approach and confirm that success is effective when the human family is seen as one.

Economic indicators show that in the last 20 years the decisive factors in productivity have shifted from land and capital to know-how, technology and skill and that the wealth of the industrialized nations is based much more on this kind of the ownership than on natural resources. The words of John Paul II remain pertinent and timely: far too many people still "have no possibility of acquiring the basic knowledge which would enable them to express their creativity and develop their potential, and have no way of entering the network of knowledge and intercommunication which would enable them to see their qualities appreciated and utilized"¹. Knowledge and

¹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, par.33, at 485.

innovation have played a crucial role in development from the beginnings of human history. But with globalization and the technological revolution of the last few decades, knowledge has clearly become the key driver of competitiveness and is now profoundly reshaping the patterns of the world's economic growth and activity.

A well-designed intellectual property system must balance the private rights of inventors with the public needs of society. International intellectual property rules reflect this premise: the stated Objectives of TRIPS include the assertion that “...*the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation and to the transfer and dissemination of technology, to the mutual advantage of producers and users of technological knowledge and in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare, and to a balance of rights and obligations*”². The primary goal of intellectual property is not an allocative efficiency, but the support of a democratic culture. A human being is truly human only if he is master of his own actions and the judge of their worth, only if he is the architect of his own progress³.

Madam President,

In conclusion, let us assure you that you can count on the constructive spirit and support of the Holy See during these Assemblies.

Thank you, Madam President.

² Article 7 TRIPs Agreement.

³ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, par. 34 at

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html