



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 53rd Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies
Geneva, 8 May 2014

Madam President,

The Delegation of the Holy See joins previous speakers and expresses its sincere congratulations to you and to the Chair of the Coordination Committee for the integrity and transparency manifested throughout the entire election and confirmation process of the WIPO's Director General for the next term. We would like as well to express warmest appreciation to Dr. Francis Gurry on his re-election and confirmation for a second term as Director General.

The Holy See expects that this Organization will continue to be led in the right direction and stands ready to cooperate. Many areas of the globe today have seen considerable development, and even if this was achieved through different strategies and is marked by persisting challenges, each of these areas is taking its place among the powers destined to play a key role in the future. However, progress of a merely economic and technological kind is insufficient. Development needs to be integral. The mere fact of emerging from economic backwardness, though positive in itself, does not resolve the complex issues of human advancement. This does not happen for the countries spearheading such progress, nor for those already economically developed and not even for those that are still poor. All these countries can suffer not only through old forms of exploitation, but also from the negative consequences of an uneven growth characterized by inequality.

The Holy See recognizes the role of the protection system of intellectual property in promoting the literary, scientific or artistic production and, generally, the inventive activity for the sake of the "common good". At the same time, it emphasizes the ethical and social dimensions that in a unique way involve the human person and her action. All too often, as Jean Paul II observed, "*the fruits of scientific progress, rather than being placed at the service of the entire human community, are distributed in such a way that unjust inequalities are actually increased or even rendered permanent*"¹. The Holy See has constantly highlighted, in this and in other *fora*, that there is a 'social mortgage' on all private property including 'intellectual property' and 'knowledge'. The historical *Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities*, signed last year in Marrakech, shows that the law of profit alone should not

¹ John Paul II, Address to 'Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign', 23 September 1999.

place undue limits on what is essential for education and for the fight against hunger, disease, and poverty.

The World Intellectual Property Indicators in 2013 show that during the current term of the Director General, the PCT, the Madrid system and the Hague system, have achieved excellent results. The distribution of IP filing activity varied across income groups. For the period 2007 - 2012, patent, trademarks and industrial designs saw a shifting trend in filing activity from high-income to middle-income countries. Still the majority of patent filings occurred at the IP offices of high-income countries (64.5%) while lower-middle income and low-income countries represented together 3.2%² of patent activity worldwide. Our challenge for the next years is to translate into reality our common goal: an accessible and efficient intellectual property system that provides benefits for all. Human imagination is resourceful and capable of finding responses to the challenges that confront the human family. All countries contribute unique gifts coming from their economic, social, cultural and spiritual traditions. Putting our “talents” at the service of the common good, will assist us in facing current and future challenges.

Among the various important areas of concern that this body is called to address, some new debates are of particular interest to this Delegation:

- reaching an agreement on a text of an international legal instrument, which will ensure the effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and folklore;
- moving forward in the negotiation on the Treaty on the Protection of Broadcast Organizations, taking into account current rapid technological developments,
- and, above all, the ratification and entry into force of the *Marrakech Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled*.

In conclusion, Madam President

Allow me to renew the Holy See’s congratulations to the Director General for his re-election and restate our will to collaborate with him and the Secretariat during this new term.

Thank you, Madam President.

² http://www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/ipstats/en/wipi/2013/pdf/wipo_pub_941_2013_highlights.pdf