

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

HON. TJEKERO TWEYA, MP

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION, TRADE AND SME DEVELOPMENT

**AT THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) ROVING SEMINAR FOR
ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZED BY ARIPO,
BIPA AND IUM**

VENUE: IUM MAIN CAMPUS, WINDHOEK

19 JUNE 2018

Director of the ceremony

Mr. Fernando dos Santos, Director General of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO),

Prof Ola-dele Aro-wolo, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Research at the International University of Management (IUM)

Heads of various Research and Academic Institutions;

Training Facilitators and participants;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the first roving seminar to be held in Namibia, under the theme “Fostering Creativity and Innovation for Economic Growth and Development in Africa”. To our brothers and sisters from ARIPO, feel at home and your presence here are truly appreciated.

There is an expectation that Intellectual Property (IP) is supposed to encourage and equally reward the innovation drivers in a country. However, if IP is not promoted and there is no political will, such expectations will surely fall flat.

I am informed that this Roving Seminar brings together a segmented stakeholder grouping, namely academic and research related institutions, as they form part of the very core of IP creation and usage, not only in Namibia but the world over.

As Namibians, we should, amidst trying economic times, consider fast tracking our vision for industrialisation in order to reap economic benefits and drive economic sustainability. However, looking at countries that have fought this battle before us, they have surely made substantial investments in research, technology and innovation, as these priority areas result in the creation of Intellectual Property.

I therefore call upon academic and research institutions to ensure we work towards a collective goal, as articulated within the 5th National Development Goal (NDP5) of driving Namibia to the 80th ranking on the Global Innovation Index (GII).

Director of ceremony

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that Intellectual Property Issues have gained significant importance in Namibia over the years and today IP reflects as a central part of our economic strategy as alluded to earlier.

What we should understand in **terms** of IP, is that everyone in society is a potential user and creator of intellectual property. Through national and international rules and systems, such right can be afforded to the creators, and it therefore becomes pertinent for each country to provide incentives and financing for innovation and creation, which in-turn leads to economic, cultural and social progress.

Namibia has great potential for driving output in IP, this is supported by data. During 2016/17, Namibia has seen a total of three thousand and thirty eight (3038) applications for Trade Marks, and from that number a total of 924 were registered.

We have received 204 applications for Copyright of which 190 were accepted. And jointly for the same period, Namibia received 64 applications for patents and industrial designs of which 37 were registered and granted.

These figures exclude designations received through the Banjul Protocol and Madrid system for Trademarks, as well as designations through PCT & Harare and Hague & Harare for Patents.

I do admit, we can do much better in the area of copyright and filling of patents. How do we do this you might ask? Well, today we have academic and research institutions here, you are authors and creators of literary works, these works, although granted automatic copyright, can also be registered with BIPA, making it much easier should a person or entity infringe on those rights. Equally we have a thriving arts and cultural sectors in the country, be it recording, performing or visual, these artists create new and creative work on a daily basis, but we do not see them queuing up to register their works.

Director of proceedings,

Today we are joined by a number of institutions and organizations in which research is a core activity on a daily basis. When we think of research, we think of output, be it academic papers at Honours, Masters or even PhD level, not excluding papers for journals. But we also think about new scientific discoveries, some of which are breakthrough in innovation and creativity in the various fields.

This means that you, as academic, research and development institutions need to align your policy framework towards that of the country, the region and the globe. You are the owners of such Intellectual Property being created and therefore need protection, especially when it results in commercial exploitation of Intellectual Property created by Researchers in the course of their duties or activities at the Institute. That process also involves discussions with a multitude of stakeholders about sharing of the economic benefits arising from the commercialization of Intellectual Property.

The Regulations of the Industrial Property Act, Act No. 1 of 2012 has recently been Gazetted and will be taking effect as from 01 August 2018. This will assure compatibility of national laws to the regional and international legal framework. We must understand that new legislation changes the playing field, as the various stakeholders, who are in fact owners of these statues would need to be made aware of such changes and benefits in order to harness better participation, use-of and understanding of the IP regulatory framework within Namibia.

It is a known fact that intellectual property adds immense value for consumers and contributes to economic growth in both developed and developing countries by stimulating innovation, cultural diversity and technical development. Therefore, the use of intellectual property rights can also be a key tool for the alleviation of poverty through trade. Less than 3 weeks ago, a team from my ministry had further consultations with stakeholders on the National Investment Promotion Strategy where IP was a key

consideration, especially to promote innovation and draw foreign and or direct investment into Namibia.

Director of Proceedings,

No sector can flourish if there are gaps and leakage. In the area of IP, we are challenged with the issue of IP theft. This has immense and adverse effects on the economy on the owners, but indirectly on the country. Intellectual property theft requires the fierce combating of counterfeiting, piracy and infringement and as such, needs not only the interventions of governments but also businesses and civil society, to ensure we uphold the very same systems we put in place for society to reap the benefits.

Ladies and gentlemen, I strongly believe that this seminar is taking place at an opportune time. A time of adopting a new Copyrights Bill which is awaiting the second reading from the stakeholders. This Bill aims to expand the scope of copyright protection and to provide a stronger framework to fight piracy, while creating a more conducive environment for investment in the digital industry.

The Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA) is also working on a new IP policy that would attempt to mainstream intellectual property into our economic and social development and to further promote innovation and creativity through a more holistic approach to intellectual property matters.

I have also been informed that BIPA is in the process to negotiate on Intellectual Property Agreements / treaties that will administer Industrial Property laws relating to Trade Marks, Patents, Industrial Design, Geographical Indications and Copyright.

All this work by BIPA will take center in order to sensitize stakeholders on mainstreaming IP in their economic activities, to generate more value addition and to promote innovation and creativity.

Given the direction in which we are moving, it is crucial that both policy makers and other stakeholders have an in-depth insight into the intricacies of Intellectual Property Rights. The discussions over the next two-days will certainly contribute in achieving this objective.

In light of the above, I thus call on Namibian researchers, institutions, innovators, entrepreneurs and all other IP rights holders to take full advantage of the country's membership to ARIPO to protect their rights through the ARIPO regional system. The value that this partnership bring to Namibia cannot be over emphasised.

In conclusion, this high-level workshop has been made possible due to the collaborative efforts of several factors such as ARIPO, BIPA and the host of the seminar, IUM. I would also thank ARIPO for providing financial assistance to organize the workshop.

With these words, I wish you all a productive and fruitful deliberations and as such I declare the seminar officially open.

I thank you!