Address to ARIPO’s Council of Ministers, Luska, November 18, 2015

Olav STOKKMO, Chief Executive of IFRRO

- Chair of the ARIPO Council of Ministers, Rtd. Major General Kahinda Otafire
- Honorable Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry of the Republic of Zambia, Hon. Margaret Mwanakatwe
- Chair of the ARIPO Administrative Council, Mr. Anthony Bwenbya
- Director General of ARIPO, Mr. Fernando dos Santos
- Ministers of the ARIPO Member States
- Members of the ARIPO Administrative Council
- Representative of Director General of WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organization
- Director General of OAPI, Dr. Paulin Edou Edou
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Republic of Zambia
- Distinguished Guests and ARIPO Cooperating partners
- Ladies and Gentlemen
- All protocols observed

1. Allow me first to thank you for the invitation to attend ARIPO’s 15th meeting of the Council of Ministers and for the great hospitality that has been extended to me – by ARIPO and, in particular, the host country Zambia and its people.

2. IFRRO - the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations - is the main international network of rightholder bodies in the print media sector with 145 member organisations in 80 countries worldwide, that is of Collective Management Organisations, or RROs - Reproduction Rights Organisations – as we call them in the print and publishing sector, and international and national authors and publishers associations. These organisations represent several millions of authors and publishers worldwide, and work to offer easy legal access and usages of copyright text and image works in books, journals and other periodicals and music in print.

3. We have collaborated with ARIPO since 2006, when we first signed an agreement on cooperation in Geneva, witnessed by WIPO, the past years, from ARIPO’s side, under the skillful leadership of DG, Mr. Fernando dos Santos, who also addressed the IFRRO World Congress when it met in Istanbul in 2013. I also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Maureen Fondo, ARIPO Copyright Administrator at this year’s IFRRO Congress in Mexico last week. She contributed constructively to discussions on key copyright issues at various Congress events.

4. ARIPO plays a crucial role in the development of intellectual property not only in Africa, but also beyond its Member States. The ARIPO-IFRRO collaboration, under the cooperation agreement, resulted, among other things in an education programme on copyright and collective rights management, which now forms the backbone of the Virtual Learning module that the WIPO Academy offers on collective management.
5. Copyright has become a part of everyday life. It is not only vital to culture, and the building and maintenance of national and regional cultural identity. It is also pivotal to the economy and the development of what is referred to as the knowledge economy.

6. The copyright sector is a major contributor to the economy and employment. Studies in some 40 countries using a methodology developed for WIPO show that, in three-quarters of the surveyed countries, the copyright sector contributes between 4% and 6.5% to the GDP, with an average contribution of 5.9% to the employment. In any given country, few sectors offer such an important contribution to the economy and employment.

7. To us at IFRRO, it appears that ARIPO has the vision to play a role in visualising the importance of the IP sector in the region. We have therefore also proposed a solution for the ongoing discussions at the WIPO SCCR, which implies a central role for ARIPO. Our proposed solution is made up of three elements: (i) information exchange; (ii) a demand driven technical assistance programme, sub-regionally coordinated by, among others, ARIPO; and (iii) government cooperation, including for the implementation of legislation, again coordinated sub-regionally, in sub-Saharan English speaking countries by ARIPO. IFRRO has also offered to collaborate, and share information and best practices, when required, and as the countries and organisations involved find appropriate.

8. On a shorter term, IFRRO, ARIPO and WIPO are examining an assistance programme to CMOs, which, among other things, would be based on the TAG initiative, which aims at enhancing the Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance of CMOs. I hope to see some concrete activities on this next year, taking advantage of the ARIPO training centre in Harare.

9. At IFRRO, we appreciate the importance that ARIPO puts on copyright, copyright education, and the development of copyright infrastructures, including through collective rights management. It is truly a leading force in the region on matters related to copyright, through its copyright division, led by Ms. Maureen Fondo and under the inspired leadership of the ARIPO DG.

10. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with ARIPO in strengthening its copyright division, the advancement of copyright education and enforcement, and in the development of the ARIPO training facilities in Harare as a centre of excellence in the region for copyright education activities.

11. I thank you again for allowing IFRRO to address this distinguished audience, congratulate ARIPO on its achievements, and wish you successful deliberations with results that will allow ARIPO to develop further as a leading force on the IP arena.

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