



MEDIA RELEASE

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HON. NOBERT MAO SIGNS WIPO TREATY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, GENETIC RESOURCES, AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

On December 4, 2024, Hon. Nobert Mao, Uganda's Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, made a historic move by signing the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) headquarters in Geneva. The treaty aims to establish a global framework to protect and promote the intellectual property rights of nations, particularly concerning their genetic resources and traditional knowledge. This landmark agreement seeks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of these valuable assets.

In his remarks, Minister Mao highlighted Uganda's commitment to protecting its cultural heritage and natural resources, emphasizing that the treaty will strengthen the country's capacity to protect its indigenous knowledge and support sustainable development. He remarked, "This treaty is a significant step towards safeguarding our cultural and natural assets and ensuring that local communities are fairly compensated for the use of their traditional knowledge and resources."

The Director-General of WIPO Daren Tang expressed his strong support for Uganda's efforts, pledging to assist the country in building its intellectual property (IP) capacity. He noted that WIPO is committed to supporting Uganda in strengthening its IP systems to ensure that the benefits of this treaty are fully realized. Mr. Tang further highlighted the importance of the treaty in enabling developing countries like Uganda to protect their valuable resources and traditional knowledge while fostering innovation and sustainable development.

The signing of the WIPO Treaty and the pledge from the Director-General to assist Uganda in building IP capacity signals a strong partnership between WIPO and Uganda, setting the stage for enhanced international cooperation and development in intellectual property. This milestone underscores Uganda's leadership in the global dialogue on the protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and cultural heritage. The Minister's engagement with the diaspora reflects

For more information, please contact:

Margaret Awino Kafeero

Head of Public Diplomacy

margaret.kafeero@mofa.go.ug, 0787639414

Uganda's growing influence in the global arena, as well as its ongoing efforts to strengthen its economy, promote sustainable development.

In addition to the signing, Minister Mao also took time to meet with members of the Ugandan diaspora living in Switzerland, a meeting organized by the Uganda Permanent Mission. During the meeting, he commended them for their contribution to national development and encouraged them to invest in Uganda's growing economy and to continue working closely with the Ugandan Mission. "Your expertise and resources are vital in driving Uganda's progress. We welcome you to invest back home and support initiatives that will improve livelihoods, foster innovation, and protect our heritage," he said.

The Minister was accompanied by the Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Marcel Tibaleka, the Registrar General of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) – Ms. Mercy Kainobwisho, Mr. Gilbert Agaba, Director, Intellectual Property, URSB and staff of the Permanent Mission. Also in attendance was the Assistant Director General, Mr. Edward Kwakwa and Mr. Wend, Wendland, the WIPO Director for Traditional Knowledge. **END**

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