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Zimbabwe Commemorates World Intellectual Property Day 2023 in Bulawayo Celebrating Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity

Bulawayo, 26 April 2023: The Companies and Intellectual Property Office of Zimbabwe (CIPZ), African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), and Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation in Africa (AfrIPI) are joining the whole world today to commemorate **World Intellectual Property Day (WIPD)**. The celebrations in Zimbabwe will take place in the city centre of Bulawayo.

Participating in the WIPD celebrations are stakeholders from the private and public sectors. They will be addressed by the Chief Registrar of CIPZ, Mr Willie Mushayi, the Director General of ARIPO, Mr Bemanya Twebaze, the team leader of AfrIPI, Ms Aida Galindo, and the guest of honour, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Mrs Virginia Mabiza.

The event is being held under the global theme 'Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity.' The aim is to celebrate the 'can do' attitude of women inventors, creators, and entrepreneurs and their ground-breaking work. Research conducted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has revealed that although a large number of women are shaping the world through their innovations and hard work, they make up a small percentage of the statistics indicating ownership of creative work. These IP titles, which also translate into financial gain, are important in the realisation of gender parity goals. The barriers creating this reality are even more prevalent in Africa. IP Organisations like CIPZ, ARIPO and AfrIPI have the mandate to push awareness of such IP rights and the development opportunities that are created by knowledge-based economies.

CIPZ, ARIPO, and AfrIPI have collaborated in this event to leverage their influence and synergies as intellectual property experts locally, within the African Region, and globally. As one of the 22 Member States of ARIPO, Zimbabwe has benefitted immensely through the inter-governmental organisation's pooling of resources at a global scale to support African countries to grow and develop in the intellectual property sector.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through CIPZ, has encouraged all women in every sector of business, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, to take this opportunity to gather enough information about intellectual property and understand how they can protect their intellectual property as guided by our laws and constitution. The world's economic system is quickly migrating towards the knowledge-based model, which is synonymous with intellectual property. It is with this observation as a nation that the government calls upon everyone in Zimbabwe to patent their inventions, register their trade marks and deposit their copyrights.

As the annual WIPD celebrations coincide with the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, members of the public are encouraged to also visit the CIPZ, ARIPO and AfrIPI exhibition stands to learn more about IP rights and registration.

2023 marks 23 years since World IP Day was instated by Member States of WIPO in 2000, with the aim of increasing general awareness and understanding of IP. Since then, Zimbabwe



has joined the rest of the world in celebrating the one-day observance on the 26 April every year.

The Companies and Intellectual Property Office of Zimbabwe values this day as it provides a platform to promote an in-depth understanding of the contribution of intellectual property to the economy and changing livelihoods. As Zimbabwe celebrates World Intellectual Property Day, we are reminded to continue pushing for collective and transformative actions to reset the balance between women and men to create a better future for all. The theme, 'Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity', highlights the need to encourage women to register their intellectual property to protect their ideas and realise the monetary value to improve their livelihoods.

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Background

1. About Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual property rights ('IPRs' or 'IP rights') are legally enforceable rights over the use of inventions or other creative works. According to the definition of the World Intellectual Property Organization (<https://www.wipo.int/about-ip/en/>), 'IP is protected in law by, for example, patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create. By striking the right balance between the interests of innovators and the wider public interest, the IP system aims to foster an environment in which creativity and innovation can flourish.'

IPRs include trade marks, patents, utility models, industrial designs, copyright, plant breeders' rights, layout designs of integrated circuits, geographical indications, new plant varieties and traditional knowledge, genetic resources, and expressions of folklore. However, certain variations in definitions and categories may be found in each country.

IP rights, as intangible assets, are key to the competitiveness of businesses in the global economy. IP rights are a primary method of securing a return on investment in innovation, creativity, and reputation. Apart from helping companies to protect their inventions from competitors, IP rights can also be an essential source of cash flow through licensing deals or IP sales. They are also a significant pull factor for attracting investors.

2. About CIPZ

CIPZ is responsible for the national registration of and maintenance of the registers for:

- i) Patents
- ii) Trade marks
- iii) Geographical indications
- iv) Industrial designs
- v) Copyright and neighbouring rights
- vi) Uniform and badges
- vii) Flags, Armorial Bearing, and Heraldic representations



- viii) Coat of Arms
- ix) International emblems

3. About ARIPO

ARIPO is an intergovernmental organisation that facilitates cooperation among its Member States in intellectual property matters. The purpose of ARIPO is to pool resources for the promotion, development, and harmonisation of the IP laws and policies of ARIPO Member States. The objective of ARIPO, amongst others, is to establish common services and organs for IP coordination, development and harmonisation. The Member States of ARIPO comprise Botswana, The Kingdom of Eswatini, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, The Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. You can read more about ARIPO at www.aripo.org

4. About AfrIPI

AfrIPI is a pan-African project that aims to support the European Union in creating, administering, utilising, protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights across Africa. It aligns with international and European best practices and supports the African Continental Free Trade Area and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The overall objective of the AfrIPI project is to facilitate intra-African trade and African and European investment. The project is funded and directed by the European Union, co-funded and implemented by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). You can read more about AfrIPI at www.afripi.org

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