



Women in Intellectual Property Conference

Press Release

28–30 AUGUST 2024

KAMPALA, UGANDA



Funded by the European Union



AfrIPI, project funded by the European Union and implemented by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)

Uganda to Host Historic Conference to Empower African Women in Intellectual Property and Innovation

Kampala, Uganda - Uganda is set to host the first-ever Women in Intellectual Property (IP) Conference from 28 to 30 August 2024. Organised by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), and the EU-funded “Africa Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation (AfrIPI)” project, the conference will redefine the landscape of intellectual property for women on the African continent.

The conference, titled Enhancing Women's Participation in IP, will have H.E. Maj (RTD) Jessica Alupo, the Vice President of Uganda, as the Guest of Honour. It will bring together high-level participants from the 22 ARIPO member states, including heads of IP offices, academics, advocates, engineers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and SMEs.

Building on the momentum of World IP Day 2023's focus on ‘Women and IP,’ the conference aims to spotlight the remarkable achievements of women in the IP field across the ARIPO region, and Africa as a whole, by showcasing groundbreaking IP inventions by African women. The event seeks to demystify innovation and underscore its tangible impact on businesses and SMEs, paving the way for a significant increase in the presence and influence of women in IP leadership roles throughout the continent.

Ms. Mercy K. Kainobwiso, Registrar General at the Uganda Registration Services Bureau, appreciated the opportunity presented to Uganda in hosting the conference, adding that the National IP Office, URSB, would use the conference to showcase the strides made in Intellectual Property specifically relating to attracting more women into the field.

‘We are grateful to ARIPO and EU-funded AfrIPI project for considering Uganda as hosts for the first Women in IP conference in Africa. The field of Intellectual Property has gained traction and attracted a lot of interest from key

stakeholders. This conference gives us an opportunity to increase awareness as well as showcase women champions in Intellectual Property,' she said.

Mr. Bemanya Twebaze, the ARIPO Director General, noted that Empowering women and ensuring their participation in the IP ecosystem is vital for economic growth. He called for ARIPO and its cooperating partners to commit to promoting women in IP. *“Our collaborative efforts must ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from the IP system. This includes promoting women's contributions to innovation and creativity, supporting female inventors and creators, and addressing the gender gap in IP rights acquisition and enforcement,”* he said.

European Union Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Jan Sadek, said: “The European Union has long championed gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life. In Intellectual Property, we recognise that women's participation and leadership are essential for innovation and creativity. The regional conference organised next week with our support is a milestone in the right direction.”

Nancy Samuriwo, Intellectual Property Rights expert from AfriPI emphasised the untapped potential in women's contributions to IP. ‘When women can protect and commercialise their innovations, they become powerful catalysts for economic growth, job creation, and social change,’ she said, instilling a sense of optimism about the future.

The Women in IP Conference in ARIPO member states is not just an event; it's a transformative movement of empowerment. By fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and empowerment, this landmark conference is poised to reshape the IP landscape in Africa, creating a more inclusive and innovative future for all.

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Notes to Editor

1. URSB

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) is a semi-autonomous government agency established by Act of Parliament in 1998 in Uganda. The Bureau is a key player in commercial, civil, and intellectual property rights registration, facilitating private sector development and providing vital statistics for national planning. Discover more about URSB at www.ursb.go.ug

2. ARIPO

ARIPO is an intergovernmental organisation facilitating cooperation among its member states in intellectual property matters. The Organisation pools resources for promoting, developing, and harmonising the IP laws and policies of ARIPO Member States. The objective of ARIPO, amongst others, is to establish standard services and bodies for IP rights coordination, development, and harmonisation. The Member States of ARIPO include Botswana, the Kingdom of Eswatini, Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Discover more about ARIPO at www.aripo.org

3. AfrIPI

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

The AfrIPI project aims to facilitate intra-African trade and African and European investment. The project is funded and directed by the European Union and co-funded and implemented by the European Union Intellectual Property Office. Read more about AfrIPI at www.afripi.org

4. EUIPO

The EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) is one of the largest decentralised agencies of the European Union, based in Alicante, Spain. In 2024, it was ranked as the most innovative IP office in the world for the fifth time. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2024, the EUIPO has managed the registration of EU trade marks since 1994 and designs since 2003, both of which are intellectual property rights that cover the 27 Member States of the European Union. The agency added another IP right,

craft and industrial geographical indications, to its portfolio in 2023. The EUIPO also carries out cooperation activities at the EU and international level to create a level playing field in the IP world and hosts the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights.

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