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MEDIA RELEASE: BIPA BUILDS COPYRIGHT CAPACITY

The Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA) is organising a series of capacity building seminars and a public lecture on Copyright from 18-20 September 2019 in Windhoek. The objectives of the Seminars and Public Lecture are to build capacity amongst copyright stakeholders, with the view of enabling them to effectively engage, participate and contribute towards the appropriate draft Copyright Bill. Furthermore, the engagements are intended to build consensus on Namibia's approach towards copyright and aligning copyright to support national development plans.

Currently, the protection and promotion of copyright in Namibia is administered in terms of the Copyright and Neighboring Rights Protection Act, 1994 (Act No. 6 of 1994). The act is however outdated, given that the landscape of copyright ownership and access to copyrighted works have evolved and advanced significantly in the past decades. BIPA, in response to the opportunities and challenges which were not anticipated in the current Copyright Act, is undertaking a review of the act with the aim of developing a new Copyright and Related Rights Bill.

Professor William Fischer, renowned international expert in Intellectual Property Law from Harvard University, will assist with the capacity building seminars. The seminars are targeted at relevant government officials; law enforcers; authors, publishers, musicians and artists; consumer groups and industry bodies; academics and students; etc.

During the official opening of the event in Windhoek on Wednesday, the Deputy Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development, Lucia Iipumbu, noted that innovation and entrepreneurial activity increase economic activity by creating new products and markets that did not exist before. "It is this innovation that is protected by intellectual property rights – in today's technologically advanced knowledge economy, intellectual property provides businesses with a valuable source of economic value," she said.

Acting CEO of BIPA, Vivienne Katjiuongua, noted that developing intellectual property allow the creators the opportunity to create a sustainable livelihood for themselves, through their creativity and

natural talents. According to her, protecting intellectual property rights is crucial to the development of Namibia's economy, alleviating unemployment and reducing the inequality gap between rich and poor.

According to BIPA Executive for Intellectual Property, Ainna Kaundu, the draft copyright will be finalised by the end of the year, after which it will be submitted through the established law making process next year.

Ends.

More information is available from:

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General

The Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA) was established in terms of the Business and Intellectual Property Authority Act, 2016 (Act No. 8 of 2016) with the mandates to promote and enable services related to:

- Businesses registration to improve Namibia's competitiveness with the view of promoting commerce, trade and investment;
- Intellectual property rights administration and protection aimed at promoting socio-economic development, innovation and value-added industrialisation.

Our objectives are to:

- facilitate economic growth and development to raise income and promote investment and create employment;
- enhance the efficient protection of the business and IP in Namibia;
- facilitate and promote the efficient and effective registration of business and industrial property in Namibia;
- promote the conduct and use of business and intellectual property in Namibia;
- facilitate, streamline, simplify and harmonise the business and industrial property procedures, registrations, filings and searches to expedite economic growth and development; and
- enhance the efficient exchange and distribution of information.