Book Review Symposium Introduction: Intellectual Property Rights and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

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Based on selected presentations at the fifth edition of the All Africa Intellectual Property (IP) Summit that held in Kigali in November 2025 and interesting post-summit contributions, this book offers a timely and multifaceted analyses of the complexities of harnessing IP rights for sustainable development in Africa.

Through case and thematic analyses drawn from specific African countries and regional organizations, the book explores the intersection of IP with crucial sectors that are key to advancing sustainable development in Africa. In particular, the book situates the IP and sustainable development conversation within the context of agriculture and food security, access to medicines and

public health, gender empowerment, small business development, innovation and patent quality, financing, innovation, entrepreneurship and commercialization, data protection, traditional knowledge and artificial intelligence in Africa. In this connection, the book explores the interaction between IP rights and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which are also articulated in the African Union's development objectives (Agenda 2063).

The book interrogates how IP is both an enabler of innovation and a source of development challenges in Africa, especially where the legal and institutional frameworks are misaligned with the continent's socio-economic realities. The central argument advanced throughout the book is the need for a context-sensitive IP framework that is development-oriented to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development in Africa. The book demonstrates the transformative potential of IP in the innovation/creative, agricultural, financing, entrepreneurial, health and manufacturing sectors.

In his powerful foreword to the book, Prof Chidi Oguamanam noted the book is "well-timed" and offers "practical and cutting-edge insights on why it is imperative for Africa to influence the global intellectual property system no longer from the margins". According to him, the book:

"contributes significantly not only to the ongoing progressive continental reorientation on intellectual property, but also to Africa's strategic engagement in global regime complexes in which intellectual property rights are increasingly matters of existential survival and sustainability of African peoples and their developmental aspirations. Although framed for Africa, written by Africans, the contributions in this volume will be resourceful beyond Africa. They resonate across all regime complexes at the intersections of intellectual property trade, innovation, and development. Researchers of various shades and interests, IP policy makers and bureaucrats at national, regional and global institutional levels as well as interdisciplinary development experts within and outside Africa will find the voices and perspectives in this volume extremely useful at such a critical transition time for the future of IP and development in general, and sustainable development in particular."

This symposium brings together expert and critical reviews of the book from two outstanding scholars in the field of intellectual property and international

human rights law: while Dr Anthony Kakooza examines the strengths and gaps, Dr Lineekela Ihuhua explores the African voices that echo through the book.

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