Subject: The International Trademark Association (INTA) -- Written Statement for the 2020 ECOSOC High Level Segment “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

Founded in 1878, the International Trademark Association (INTA) is the world’s oldest and largest brand owners association. With a membership of over 7,200 companies, the Association represents over 31,000 trademark professionals in diverse capacities: multinational corporations, businesses of all sizes, law firms and other professionals, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations from 190 countries.

Our mission is to encourage and support best practices and excellence in the field of trademarks and related intellectual property rights, and protection of rights for brand owners and consumers, as well as foster economic growth and innovation through awareness of the importance and development of brands. The Association is dedicated to the support and advancement of trademarks and related intellectual property rights as elements of fair and effective national and international commerce. To achieve this goal, INTA’s four year Strategic Plan of 2018-2021 is to: 1) Promote the value of Trademarks and Brands, 2) Reinforce Consumer Trust, and 3) Embrace Innovation and Change.

It is with these strategic directions that INTA appreciates the importance of this year’s ECOSOC theme namely “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The Association notes that the theme underscores the importance of sustainable economic development in stepping up progress towards the SDGs. Indeed, the interplay between innovation and economic and social progress is well established and is expressly recognized in SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation. In this regard, a balanced intellectual property landscape will contribute to achieve the goal stated by SDG 9.

Brands in virtually every sector of the economy are protected through the trademarks they are represented by. Trademarks are more widely used than any other form of intellectual property,
particularly by small and medium sized enterprises. The value of trademarks has been demonstrated through various brand rankings and in recent studies. For instance, INTA just released its “Brand Value Special Task Force Report.” This Report explores brand value, brand equity, brand valuation, and brand evaluation—concepts that are especially significant during times of economic uncertainty and changing consumer behavior. In the same vein, INTA and the InterAmerican Association of Intellectual Property (ASIPI) completed a recent study “Trademarks in Latin America: A study of their economic impact in 10 countries in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and Peru).”

In the 10 countries studied, trademark intensive-sectors:

- Contributed US $766.6 billion to the total GDP (22 percent average) of these countries.
- Employed 35 million workers of the total workforce (18 percent average), which is larger than the size of the population of Peru.
- Paid wages up to 57 percent more than non-trademark-intensive sectors.
- Contribute 31 percent of exports and 34 percent of imports, on average.

“Brands for a Better Society, a new committee established by INTA, investigates how brands are contributing to the achievement of the SDGs and hence the creation of a more sustainable economy. Furthermore, it delves into brands’ commitment to CSR policies and initiatives.

Responding to the call of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres for an urgent and coordinated response that focuses on the health emergency, the Association launched INTA Community Cares: COVID-19 Donation Campaign to fund the purchase and distribution of masks and other personal protective equipment to public hospitals and/or nonprofit organizations, and/or contribute directly to local charitable organizations assisting healthcare institutions and the public in dealing with COVID-19.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused counterfeiters to take advantage of innocent consumers by producing counterfeit essential items such as face masks, medicines and medical equipment. In response to the increased production of counterfeit essential items, the Anticounterfeiting Committee has offered its support through information sharing and brand trainings to international authorities such as the World Customs Organization, INTERPOL, the United States Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, as well as local law enforcement globally. On the youth side, the Association’s Unreal Campaign is ramping up our online presence and helping to educated
young consumers on the dangers or counterfeit products particularly by using relevant examples related to counterfeit PPE.

In light of the above, ensuring that trademarks and other related rights are properly promoted and enforced will undoubtedly fast-track the realization of the 2030 Agenda and brings the most transformative changes in development pathways. The International Trademark Association stands ready to work with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in this endeavor.

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