

**Statement by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of
Pakistan to the United Nations, at the Sixty-First Series of Meetings of
Assemblies of WIPO**

21st September 2020, Assembly Hall, WIPO Headquarters, Geneva

Thank you, Mr Chairman

As we meet during these challenging times, we commend your leadership and acknowledge the efforts of WIPO Secretariat to organize this meeting.

We recognize dynamic leadership and valuable contributions made by outgoing Director General Francis Gurry and wish him well in his future endeavours.

We congratulate Mr. Daren Tang on his election as the new Director General and look forward to engage constructively with him and his team.

I am pleased to inform that Pakistan has completed internal formalities to accede to the Madrid Protocol for International Registration of Marks. We are now in the process of submitting the Instrument of Ratification. We look forward to working with the Secretariat in channeling necessary assistance to the national IPO office in this regard.

Mr Chairman,

WIPO has an important responsibility to steer the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

Such a responsibility is even more relevant in the light of Covid19 outbreak and its varied socio-economic impacts. We urge the Secretariat to organize a series of seminars to raise awareness about the effects of Covid-19 pandemic and the balanced realization of public health needs and the existing IP regime. We echo the calls made by UNSC, DG WHO and many countries to declare COVID-19 related medicines and vaccines as global public good. A balanced adjustment in intellectual property rights on COVID technologies, particularly vaccines, is essential to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines to all, based on public health needs rather the capacity to pay and free from undue monopoly controls.

Mr. Chairman

Besides adjustment to IP system to tackle COVID pandemic, I will briefly highlight six other key challenges that require careful consideration by this session:

One – the challenge of rule making: On the development of international legal instruments, WIPO needs to keep pace with the fast evolving technological & economic developments and to help unlock the normative logjam through consensus and political will. The finalization of an international instrument on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore and Design Law Treaty (DLT) should be prioritized.

Two - the challenge of development and capacity-building: There is a serious mismatch between the requirements of countries and resources available. The regional bureaus are understaffed and underequipped to address capacity-building tasks. This is reflected in an inordinate reliance on consultants. An urgent review is needed to enhance WIPO's delivery of development projects.

Three –there has been unnecessary fragmentation of vital functions across various units of the organization. This is especially true for innovation related issues and provision of legal assistance. This leads to serious difficulties for Member States to obtain coherent advice in areas of vital importance to them. There is an urgent need to align the organizational structures to key functions.

Four – the challenge of governance that seriously impacts the effectiveness and accountability of WIPO's operations. This area needs urgent consideration including the number of terms and duration of officers of the Senior Management Team, the reporting lines of the internal oversight bodies and independence of the staff associations. The question of retaining or extending the tenure of existing senior management team, due to Covid, needs to be addressed urgently.

Five - the issue of open and inclusive deliberations: Participation in key WIPO committees such as Coordination Committee (CoCo) and PBC and other important discussions such as on that of draft agenda of WIPO bodies should be open to all interested Member States.

Lastly – the challenge of unnecessary distractions - In this age of digital connectivity when even this gathering could be held in a hybrid format with full

participation from the capitals, the issue of opening new External Offices represents such distraction. We believe that the evaluation of entire network of external offices should be open, inclusive and transparent and in line with recommendations of the external auditor's report. A serious review is needed to determine the rationality of establishing new EOs and also the development of a clearer strategy for offices outside of Geneva.

Thank you Mr. Chair