

General Statement of the South Centre to the 2015 WIPO Assemblies

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies Ambassadors, Director General, Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The South Centre is an intergovernmental organization and think tank of developing countries. We applaud the important step that the United Nations (UN) as a whole has taken in adopting the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), achieved by consensus. The SDGs, that will become applicable from January 2016, embrace a common vision to transform our world for the better by 2030 through increased global collaboration.

We look forward to the future preparation of a new strategic framework for the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) with strategic goals aligned to those of the broader UN system. We also look forward to the strengthened cooperation between WIPO and other UN agencies and the continued work of the WIPO Member States and the WIPO Secretariat to realize this shared vision within the framework of WIPO's mandate, as a specialized UN agency and under its convention.

We encourage WIPO Member States to guide the work of the organization towards shaping a more inclusive and balanced international intellectual property system. One that is part of a broader knowledge governance system that works for all, -the variety of industries, big and small firms, entrepreneurs, artists, researchers, students, indigenous peoples, farmers and patients- around the world. One that promotes knowledge creation and diffusion, that accelerates transfer of technology and know-how, especially of essential technologies for global health, food sovereignty and to respond to climate change. One that promotes sharing of innovations developed with public financing. One that is conducive to the exercise and realization of human rights. One that allows all States sufficient policy space to carefully assess and manage the effects of intellectual protection and enforcement assessing the benefits against costs. One that promotes the use of safeguards to ensure balance between protection and access, and to prevent misuse and abuse of intellectual property rights.

Sustained effort towards realizing a Development Agenda for WIPO, including the implementation of the agreed 45 recommendations, is a key enabler for this task.

We hope that the discussions this week by the 2015 WIPO Assemblies will succeed in a spirit of collaboration, compromise and consensus, as that which allowed UN Member States to arrive at the post 2015 Development Agenda. In particular, to build the necessary political will to advance in good faith the text based work to arrive at effective solutions to tackle the continued misappropriation and misuse of genetic resources and traditional knowledge through the IP system, and at long last give due recognition to the role of traditional knowledge in fostering creativity and innovation and promoting good health and poverty reduction.

We also call on the 2015 WIPO General Assembly to provide guidance on a number of other pending issues, including: to finalize discussions on the report of the independent review of WIPO technical assistance and implement its recommendations; guide the Standing Committee on Patents towards a balanced and concrete work plan that includes development of new tools to inform technical assistance on the use of patent related flexibilities in the public interest and in particular in the area of public health; advance norm-setting work to remove

copyright and digital restrictions on the cross-border transfer of works based on limitations and exceptions, to promote learning, research, education by all, including persons with disabilities; and reach agreement on the application of the coordination mechanism on the WIPO Development Agenda recommendations to all WIPO bodies.

The South Centre also encourages WIPO Member States to ratify, for its rapid coming into force, the groundbreaking Marrakesh Agreement to Facilitate Access to Published Works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities.

Finally, the South Centre reaffirms its commitment to fully supporting developing countries and Least Developed Countries in shaping their national IP policies and systems. In this context, we highlight our full support for the duly motivated request of LDCs to the WTO TRIPS Council to delay pharmaceutical patent protection in the context of the WTO TRIPS Agreement, and call on WIPO as the leading provider of technical assistance to both WIPO and WTO Member States, and on WIPO Member States, to strengthen its support to LDCs to use this flexibility for access to medicines and to build local pharmaceutical capacity.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.