

## **Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO**

### **Sixty-First Series of Meetings Geneva, September 21 to 25, 2020**

#### GENERAL REPORT

*adopted by the Assemblies*

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This General Report records the deliberations and decisions of the following 22 Assemblies and other bodies of the Member States of WIPO (the “Assemblies”):

- (1) WIPO General Assembly, fifty-third (29<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (2) WIPO Conference, forty-first (17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (3) WIPO Coordination Committee, seventy-eighth (51<sup>st</sup> ordinary) session
- (4) Paris Union Assembly, fifty-sixth (32<sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (5) Paris Union Executive Committee, sixtieth (56<sup>th</sup> ordinary) session
- (6) Berne Union Assembly, fiftieth (26<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (7) Berne Union Executive Committee, sixty-sixth (51<sup>st</sup> ordinary) session
- (8) Madrid Union Assembly, fifty-fourth (31<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (9) Hague Union Assembly, fortieth (18<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (10) Nice Union Assembly, fortieth (16<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (11) Lisbon Union Assembly, thirty-seventh (14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (12) Locarno Union Assembly, fortieth (17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (13) IPC [International Patent Classification] Union Assembly, forty-first (19<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (14) PCT [Patent Cooperation Treaty] Union Assembly, fifty-second (30<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (15) Budapest Union Assembly, thirty-seventh (17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (16) Vienna Union Assembly, thirty-third (15<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (17) WCT [WIPO Copyright Treaty] Assembly, twentieth (11<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (18) WPPT [WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty] Assembly, twentieth (11<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (19) PLT [Patent Law Treaty] Assembly, nineteenth (11<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session
- (20) Singapore Treaty [Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks] Assembly, thirteenth (7<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) session.
- (21) Marrakesh Treaty [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled] Assembly, fifth (5<sup>th</sup> ordinary) session.
- (22) BTAP [Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances] Assembly, first (1<sup>st</sup> ordinary) session

meeting in Geneva, where the deliberations took place, and decisions were made in joint meetings of two or more of the said Assemblies and other bodies convened (hereinafter referred to as “the joint meeting(s)” and “the Assemblies of the Member States,” respectively).

2. In addition to this General Report, separate Reports have been drawn up on the sessions of the WIPO General Assembly (WO/GA/53/9), WIPO Coordination Committee (WO/CC/78/5), Paris Union Assembly (P/A/56/2), Madrid Union Assembly (MM/A/54/2), Hague Union Assembly (H/A/40/2), Marrakesh Treaty Assembly (MVT/A/5/2) and Beijing Treaty Assembly (BTAP/A/3). Furthermore, consolidated reports of the sessions of the other bodies have also been drawn up, as follows: WIPO Conference (WO/CF/41/1), Paris Union Executive Committee (P/EC/60/1), Berne Union Assembly (B/A/50/1), Berne Union Executive Committee (B/EC/66/1), Nice Union Assembly (N/A/40/1), Lisbon Union Assembly (LI/A/37/1), Locarno Union Assembly (LO/A/40/1), IPC Union Assembly (IPC/A/42/1), PCT Union Assembly (PCT/A/52/1), Budapest Union Assembly (BP/A/37/1), Vienna Union Assembly (VA/A/33/1), WIPO Copyright Treaty Assembly (WCT/A/20/1), WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty Assembly (WPPT/A/20/1), Patent Law Treaty Assembly (PLT/A/19/1) and the Singapore Treaty Assembly (STLT/A/13/1).

3. The list of the members and observers of the Assemblies, as of September 21, 2020, is set forth in document A/61/INF/1 Rev.

4. The meetings dealing with the following items of the Agenda (document A/61/1) were presided over by the following Chairs:

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 21 and 22	Ambassador Omar Zniber (Mr.) (Morocco), Chair of the WIPO General Assembly
Items 7, 9, 18, 19 and 20	Ambassador Zsuzsanna Horváth (Ms.) (Hungary), Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee
Item 13	Philippe Cadre (Mr.) (France), Vice-Chair of the Madrid Union Assembly
Item 14	Jan Walter (Mr.) (United Kingdom), Vice-Chair of the Hague Union Assembly
Item 15	Abdulaziz Mohammed Alswailem (Mr.) (Saudi Arabia), Chair of the Paris Union Assembly
Item 16	Santiago Cevallos (Mr.) (Ecuador), Chair of the Marrakesh Treaty Assembly
Item 17	Yan Xiaohong (Mr.) (China), Chair of the Beijing Treaty Assembly

5. The agenda, as adopted, the list of documents and the list of participants appear in documents A/61/1, A/61/2 and A/61/INF/5, respectively.

## ITEM 1 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### OPENING OF THE SESSIONS

6. The Sixty-First Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO was convened by the Director General of WIPO, Mr. Francis Gurry.

7. The sessions were opened in a joint meeting of all the 22 Assemblies and other bodies concerned by Ambassador Omar Zniber (Mr.) (Morocco), Chair of the WIPO General Assembly.

8. The opening statement of the Chair is recorded as follows:

“Mr. Francis Gurry,  
“Mr. Daren Tang,  
“Your Excellencies,  
“Ladies and Gentlemen,  
“Heads of Delegations  
“Dear colleagues,  
“Members of the Secretariat

“I have the pleasure of announcing the opening of the Sixty-First series of meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, and I wish to welcome all of you here and those following remotely.

“I was elected to Chair the General Assembly a year ago and I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate my thanks to all our Member States for the trust that they have put

in the Kingdom of Morocco. We are the first Arab state and the second African state to enjoy this privilege since WIPO was created. And I also wish to say that we wanted to take on this role in order to contribute to the strengthening of multilateral work because we are convinced that multilateral work is key for Moroccan diplomacy, both in terms of designing policy and implementing it. This is the best way of facing social and health challenges, and indeed the scientific challenges we face, which are the very forefront of the work of this Organization.

“Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, these series of meetings is opening in unprecedented circumstances because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Member States have shown their commitment to continue to work to their utmost to ensure that the key meetings and bodies of this Organization continue their work successfully. We are fully aware of the growing importance of this Organization at the forefront of scientific cultural and economic affairs.

“Thanks to our shared commitment to overcome the consequences of this health crisis and to find innovative solutions, we have successfully managed to hold elections, managed by the Permanent Representative of France in Geneva, who was Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee. As a result, a new Director General has been elected. The work of the PBC was also a success. Managed very successfully by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia as Chair. And now, today, I would like to reiterate our renewed commitment to hold the General Assembly in accordance with the schedule over the past few months.

“There have been discussions on the holding of an Extraordinary General Assembly during the first months of next year, which shows the commitment of Member States to constructive dialogue. Member States wish to take all possible opportunities to ensure that the Organization continues with its work program and deals with some pending issues to which Member States accord considerable importance. These series of meetings is a result of many efforts of Member States, of Coordinators, of regional groups, the efforts of the Director General and his team and the efforts of the Secretariat who have all worked tirelessly to prepare the work of these Assemblies. I wish to thank all of them for their work and their constructive contributions which have enabled us to have a balanced agenda. Taking into account the interest of all regional groups, I am convinced that this will help us move forward smoothly with the work of the Assemblies. I would like to invite all participants to show great flexibility, and particularly bearing in mind the exceptional circumstances that we are facing. The health and safety of all, of course, remains the priority both for me and for the Secretariat. All of the relevant measures have been taken to respect the current health and safety measures that we need to meet. The Swiss authorities have ensured that we meet all of the social distancing, the wearing of masks and the announcement of any symptoms. The Secretariat will announce all of the relevant measures in due course. The success of our work depends on all of our cooperation and it is important to count on all of our efforts to ensure the health and safety of all.

“The Assemblies are taking place this year also at the end of two terms of office of Director General, Francis Gurry. Over the past 12 years, he has worked tirelessly to guide the work of this Organization and this will be the combination of his work.

“We also wish to welcome the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang and wish him every success in this new cycle.

“I would also wish to extend condolences to all families and members of the Secretariat who may have been struck by the Corona virus. I invite you to respect a minute in silence.

Thank you.”

## ITEM 2 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. Discussions were based on document A/61/1 Prov.2.

10. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, adopted the agenda as proposed in document A/61/1 Prov.2 (referred to in this document as “the Consolidated Agenda”).

## ITEM 3 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

11. Discussions were based on document A/61/INF/1 Rev.

12. Introducing the agenda item, the Legal Counsel announced that the only officers to be elected were one Chair and two Vice-Chairs for each of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Paris Union Executive Committee, the Berne Union Executive Committee and the Assembly of the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances. He recalled that in the current year, with respect to the officers of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Chair and the second Vice-Chair should be elected from among the delegates of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee of the Paris Union and the first Vice-Chair from among the delegates of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee of the Berne Union, in accordance with Rule 3(2)(a) of the Special Rules of Procedures of the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Legal Counsel also announced that the Beijing Treaty Assembly would hold its inaugural session following the entry into force of the Beijing Treaty on April 28, 2020. As the WIPO General Assembly, as well as the other Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO were meeting in extraordinary sessions in 2020, the officers presiding over them were serving the second year of their respective terms of office. In order to allow the election of the officers of the Beijing Treaty Assembly to follow the same cycle as that of the other Assemblies, the Rules of Procedures proposed to be adopted by the Beijing Treaty Assembly foresaw that for the inaugural session the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Beijing Treaty Assembly be elected, exceptionally, for a period of one year, up to but not including the next ordinary session in 2021. As of 2021 and consistently thereafter, the terms of office for the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Beijing Treaty Assembly would be two years, thus putting the election of officers for the Beijing Treaty Assembly in full alignment with other bodies in WIPO. He pointed out that, as usual, the officers of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Paris Union Executive Committee, and the Berne Union Executive Committee were appointed to a one-year term. He then announced that following informal consultations among Group Coordinators and, pending further consultations among delegations on the remaining vacant officer positions, consensus had been reached to elect the following officers: the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Chair of the Berne Union Executive Committee, as well as the Chair and the first Vice-Chair of the Beijing Treaty Assembly. He encouraged the delegations to continue consultations on the still vacant officer positions and revert accordingly.

13. Commenting on the agenda item, the Chair said that as indicated by the Legal Counsel, there was consensus among delegations on the nominations as read out by him. The Chair observed that while more nominations and consultations were required for the remaining vacant positions for officers, he proposed that Member States endorse those nominations on which consensus had been reached. He therefore asked delegations, in the meantime, to continue with the consultations on the remaining nominations and inform the Legal Counsel accordingly.

14. As there was no objection, the Chair gavelled the elected officers and announced that the meeting would revert to the agenda item at a later stage.

15. Reverting to the agenda item, the Legal Counsel confirmed that Member States had reached consensus on the election of the Chair of the Paris Union Executive Committee.

16. The following officers were elected:

WIPO Coordination Committee  
Chair: Zsuzsanna Horváth (Ms.) (Hungary)  
Vice-Chair: Alfredo Suescum (Mr.) (Panama)  
Vice-Chair: Mercy Kainobwisho (Ms.) (Uganda)

Paris Union Executive Committee  
Chair: Martín Correa (Mr.) (Chile)

Berne Union Executive Committee  
Chair: Amina Smaila (Ms.) (Nigeria)

Beijing Treaty Assembly  
Chair: Yan Xiaohong (Mr.) (China)  
Vice-Chair: Diana Hasbun (Ms.) (El Salvador)

17. The list of all the officers of the Assemblies and other bodies appear in document A/61/INF/2.

#### ITEM 4 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO THE ASSEMBLIES OF WIPO

18. The Address of the Director General is recorded as follows:

“Your Excellency Ambassador Omar Zniber, Chair, WIPO General Assembly,  
“Mr. Daren Tang, Director General-Elect,  
“Your Excellencies the Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors,  
“Distinguished Delegates,

“It is a great pleasure for me to join the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly in extending a warm welcome to all delegations to the 2020 Assemblies, which are taking place in the challenging and unusual circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I thank all delegations that have been able to be present physically for their presence, as well as all those who are connected to the meeting in various parts of the world for their attention.

“I am delighted that the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang, has joined us for the opening session. As you all know, Daren Tang takes over as Director General next week, after months of dedicated preparation since his appointment in May. I wish him

every success in his tenure, which I am sure will be an outstanding one that leads the Organization forward in every way.

“I should like to thank the Chair of the General Assembly, Ambassador Omar Zniber, for his close attention to the Organization and hard work over the past twelve months in the many meetings and consultations that he has led to ensure that these Assemblies could take place and could achieve whatever was possible in the restrictive and difficult conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Equally, I should like to take the opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee, Ambassador François Rivasseau of France, and to congratulate him on successfully shepherding the process for the nomination of the new Director General. I also thank the many chairs of the Organization’s other bodies, committees and working groups for their tremendous efforts and dedication in taking the work of the Organization forward.

“Now let me turn to the business of these Assemblies. As I shall be leaving office in ten days, please allow me to start with a few words about the progress of the Organization over the past 12 years. I shall then deal briefly with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations of the Organization and, finally, please permit me to air one or two reflections of a more general nature.

“Starting with the past 12 years, I must say that it has been the consistent experience of my life that, when I am on the point of finishing a job, I feel for the first time qualified to start it. That, of course, has not been very good news for my employers. Despite this inconvenience, the Organization has been able to prosper and to thrive in the past 12 years. I have prepared a very detailed written report on all the developments in the Organization, which is available outside the meeting hall. I will not enter into the details here, but I believe that all stakeholders and the many contributors to the Organization’s operations, starting with the Member States, have reason to be pleased with the progress that the Organization has achieved as a result of a collective effort.

“It has been a period of growth and expansion that may be measured by a number of different indicators. The Organization’s Global IP Systems have extended their geographical reach and have considerably grown their user bases throughout the world. There has been record buy-in to the treaties administered by the Organization, with over 400 new accessions to those treaties, the majority coming from developing and least developed countries. Two new treaties, the Beijing and Marrakesh Treaties, have been concluded and have entered into force. A third, the Lisbon Agreement, has been substantially revised and the new Act reflecting the revision, the Geneva Act, has also entered into force.

“The financial situation of the Organization has flourished, with consistent surpluses enabling the Organization to be debt-free and to build the net assets, now some CHF 364 million, beyond the target-level set by the Member States. At the same time, fees under the Global IP Systems that are the source of the revenue of the Organization have remained constant.

“The development dimension has been mainstreamed and the Development Agenda has been advanced from a series of recommendations to concrete implementation in many areas. We have built a number of successful public-private partnerships that contribute in various ways to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



“We have added new programs and services, such as IT platforms, databases and services that have been embraced across the world, and economic analysis, the Global Innovation Index and statistical and data analytics.

“We have renovated the campus, with the addition of two major buildings that were delivered on time and on budget.

“The Organization has also embraced digital transformation, with all externally facing services operating on electronic platforms and all administrative and management procedures digitized.

“The year 2020 has been a challenging year for the whole world, as everyone is aware, with the COVID-19 pandemic bringing widespread suffering and economic and social disruption. For WIPO, the negative impact has, so far, been, relatively speaking, limited. Thanks to the embrace of digital transformation, the Global IP Services were able to continue to function at near maximum levels during the lockdown through remote working. The two areas that have been adversely affected are the normative committees and meetings, in general, and development cooperation, both obviously affected by travel restrictions and social distancing measures. My colleagues have made major efforts to maintain communications with Member States throughout the world to reduce the negative impact. Inevitably, however, full operating capacity has been reduced in these areas.

“In contrast, up until now, the financial position of the Organization has not been adversely affected. We are running a strong surplus for the first eight months of 2020. This is a consequence of the underlying performance of our Global IP Systems, which have remained remarkably resilient, with demand increased within the PCT, the major source of revenue, and not yet badly affected in our other systems. While we know that the impact of an economic downturn on the PCT is usually delayed because international applications under the PCT usually reflect activity at the national level a year earlier, the relatively positive results and resilience is, nevertheless, somewhat surprising.

“While understanding the evolution of demand in our Global IP Systems over the coming months and years is obviously of fundamental importance to planning, budgeting and management, it would be a speculative exercise at this stage to attempt to explain what is happening. We are in close contact with the countries that are the major sources of filings. The situation in those countries is not inconsistent with our own at this stage. There are several possible explanatory factors that we have been considering, although these are, as I have said, speculative at this stage.

“One factor to consider is that the IP filings have, over the course of the past ten years, consistently out-performed the world economy in growth. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that they should under-perform the world economy in rates of decline from recession, reflecting the general economic and policy emphasis on technology as a source of competitive advantage and growth. The changing geography of the main sources of demand for international IP filings may also be in play. Asia has been on the rise in the relative share of filings, now accounting for over 50% of all PCT applications. Preliminary data on PCT filings from China in 2020 indicate a sharp increase in the first six months of 2020, and this comes on what was already the largest single volume or source of PCT applications.

“Despite the relatively good performance in 2020, vigilance is certainly the order of the day. It is hard to imagine that the Organization will be able to go through 2021 unscathed, but we are in a sound financial position to weather the storm.

“On the management and policy side of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see that teleworking has worked and that it is likely to be a permanent feature of the human resource management landscape in the future. Eighty per cent of the nearly 1,000 staff who have returned to the workplace have chosen the teleworking option, which allows remote working for three days out of five, as part of their re-integration to the workplace. There will be many adjustments to be made in management and policy if this indeed turns out to be part of the new reality.

“In program terms, the durability of the crisis requires, I believe, that Member States re-imagine the meeting. This may require investment in better virtual platforms, greater emphasis on preparations and discussions before the holding of meetings and, eventually, tinkering with some procedures. There has been resistance to this direction, but we need to consider carefully how long it is likely to be before travel and national health measures are eased so that all parts of the world would be able to travel to Geneva for meetings without restrictions. The answer seems to be a long time. Pending that, in many respects the normative agenda remains at a standstill, while technology continues to advance at an increasing pace, inevitably throwing up questions and issues that may require attention.

“Now, let me turn to one or two observations of a more general nature. It is clear that technology and, in particular, the Internet, and the platforms, business models and businesses built upon it, has connected the world in ways that are qualitatively different from anything that we have ever seen before. In 2020, there are around 3.5 billion smartphone users worldwide. There are some 4 billion email users and around 306 billion emails are sent everyday worldwide, about 55% of them, incidentally, being spam. Global mobile messaging apps experience similarly large volumes of traffic. There are about two billion active users of WhatsApp and 1.2 billion users of WeChat. Facebook has about 2.7 billion monthly active users. I could multiply the examples and broaden the indicators to other areas that show how economic, social and cultural life are all connected worldwide. It is absolutely clear that the world is more connected than it has ever been and probably more open and transparent.

“But against this development of connection, there is a counter-current. There are increasing signs of closure in the world. Foreign direct investment has plummeted, protectionism has risen, global value chains are being dismantled or re-organized, and foreign investment screening conditions have tightened. These are not trends caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They emerged before the pandemic, but, of course, the measures of restriction necessitated by health management have accelerated the trends.

“So we are in the position in which the logic of technological development is pitted against the movement of policy geopolitically. On the basis of history, I would be surprised if, in the long run, technology did not prevail. There are few, if any, examples of reversing fundamental technology that has taken root in the fabric of the economy, society and cultural life.

“There are many risks associated with the collision of these two currents, ranging from the separation of peoples from governments to the disruption of economic and social life. In view of the global nature of both currents, there seems to be only one way in which the two currents may be guided into a peaceful confluence. That way is through international cooperation that is global in nature or, in other words, multilateralism.

“We are all aware that the appetite or the capacity for such multilateral action is regrettably diminished at the moment. The reconstruction of this appetite or capacity, with the inevitable changes in architecture that it may entail, is one of the major challenges that confronts the world in the coming years and decades. I am not going to

enter into the exceptionally complex task that such a reconstruction involves. Suffice it to say that the task is a long and difficult one and that the risks of failure take us into unknown and perilous waters. It involves almost every dimension of policy, including security, personal and political freedoms, market and competition supervision, tax authority, the integrity of information and data and the conduct of social and cultural life.

“Intellectual property is very much part of these policy challenges. It has historically been a vector of international connections, a means of trading and consuming intellectual and cultural assets. We have seen emerge, over the past two decades, global markets or audiences for music, audiovisual and literary works, scientific publications and technologies built upon different business models, most of which rely on digital connectivity. The process of adjustment to the new world that has been, and is being, built on the direction of technology is an extraordinarily complex and difficult one that requires the goodwill of all Member States. I am hopeful that, in the small world of intellectual property, WIPO will be able to continue to make a contribution to this adjustment.

“I should like now to express my gratitude to many people for the assistance and support that they have provided over the past 12 years. I start with the Member States and thank them for their engagement in, and support for, the Organization and, especially, for their indulgence of inevitable imperfections. In particular, I thank the Government of Australia for having nominated me to the post of Director General and for its support over the years.

“I thank all the staff. We are fortunate to have an extremely talented and professional staff at WIPO who have responded more than well to the many challenges and changes that reform and digital transformation bring. In particular, I thank the Senior Management Team, the four Deputy Directors General, Sylvie Forbin, Mario Matus, John Sandage and Binying Wang, the four Assistant Directors General, Minelik Getahun, Naresh Prasad, Ambi Sundaram and Yo Takagi, the Legal Counsel, Frits Bontekoe, and the Director of the Human Resources Management Department, Cornelia Moussa. All have made outstanding contributions and have led their sectors with dedication and aplomb and succeeded in moving their sectors in a very positive direction. I must especially mention those among them who have made the full journey of 12 years with me, Binying Wang, Naresh Prasad, Ambi Sundaram and Yo Takagi. Of them, Naresh Prasad has probably had to suffer the most in his close connection with his functions as Chief of Staff. Twelve years is a long time to put up with someone and I am deeply grateful to them for their perseverance, tolerance and indulgence. They, like the other members of the Senior Management Team, have been immensely supportive.

“Please allow me to make mention of four persons who have had to endure more than most in supporting me, namely my Assistants, Christine Collard, Cécile Müller, Tatiana Narciss and Marie-Antoine Rideau. Two of them have worked with me for 25 years. I would not have been able to undertake my duties without their careful and professional support.

“WIPO is now quite a large Organization and we rely on many external service providers, especially in the areas of security, cleaning, languages, IT and catering. These service providers are part of the Organization and its achievements. Their work has made major contributions and I thank them all.

“I also thank the industry, professional and civil society non-governmental organizations that have followed, supported and guided the work of the Organization. Their contribution has become increasingly important to the success of the Organization.

“It has been a privilege to have the opportunity to serve as Director General. The greatest privilege of all has been the opportunity to meet so many people from so many different walks of life. This has provided the opportunity for opening to the richness and diversity of the world and for understanding that we all share a common human heritage, experience and identity.”

19. The Address of the Director General-Elect is recorded as follows:

“The Chair of the General Assembly,  
“His Excellency Ambassador Omar Zniber,  
“The Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry,  
“Excellencies,  
“Distinguished Delegates,  
“Colleagues,

“It is indeed a privilege for me to say a few words to all of you today. For this opportunity, I would like to express my warm thanks to the Chair, Ambassador Zniber.

“On May 8, when I was appointed as the next Director General of WIPO by this august body, I had the opportunity to address the General Assembly, the Member States and all the stakeholders of our Organization, to express the profound honour I felt. On that same occasion, I provided a roadmap which I have in mind to guide the common journey that we will be undertaking together. Today, I would like simply to reiterate my deep sense of gratitude to all the Member States for their trust and faith in me. You can count on me to work closely with all of you in the years ahead.

“It bears repeating that through the past months, I have received invaluable advice, help and support from both Ambassador Zniber as well as from the Chair of the Coordination Committee, Ambassador François Rivasseau. Thank you very much indeed to both of you.

“To the Director General, to Francis, I would like to place on record my high admiration for the stellar results which you accomplished in the past twelve years and your lifetime of work to advance the Mission of WIPO. It is thanks to your leadership, and to the dedication of my future WIPO colleagues, that this Organization is deeply respected and highly valued. The future is full of promise, thanks to the foundations you have laid, and I look forward to continuing your outstanding work as WIPO enters a new chapter. I am confident that everyone will join me in sending to you our warmest and best wishes for your many endeavours to come.

“I also want to deeply appreciate the fact that, notwithstanding the numerous constraints and disruptions due to the current crisis, the transition over the past months has been smooth and seamless for me. In this regard, the merit belongs to the Director General and his team, and I look forward to starting my work on 1<sup>st</sup> October with all Members and WIPO colleagues.

“Distinguished delegates, before concluding, allow me to wish all success to your deliberations over the coming days.”

## ITEM 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### GENERAL STATEMENTS

20. The Delegations and Representatives of the following 112 States, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 12 non-governmental organizations provided oral or written statements under this agenda item: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (the), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe, African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), Patent Office of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), Inter-American Association of Industrial Property (ASIPI), Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN), Center for International Intellectual Property Studies (CEIPI), *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)*, Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA), Health and Environment Program (HEP), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO), International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC), Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) and Knowledge Ecology International (KEI).

21. The Statements on this agenda item are included in the Annex.

## ITEM 6 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

22. Discussions were based on document A/61/3.

23. The Chair informed that he was conducting consultations with Regional Coordinators on this agenda item, and proposed to return to it later on.

24. On reopening the agenda item, the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document A/61/3, and recalled that the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO were invited to consider applications by one intergovernmental organization (IGO), seven international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and four national NGOs, as listed in paragraph 4 of the said document, for observer status in the meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO. The Legal Counsel pointed out that, in respect of the four national NGOs, and in conformity with the principles applicable to national NGOs that had been adopted by Member States, the Secretariat had consulted with the Member States from which the NGOs originated prior to the submission of the requests to these Assemblies. In that regard, the Legal Counsel

confirmed that the necessary agreement had been received in respect of all of the four applications concerned.

25. The Delegation of China thanked the Chair and relevant parties for conducting meaningful informal consultations with its Delegation in the last two days. It stated that with regard to one of the international NGO applications for observer status in WIPO, its Delegation appreciated the constructive consultations. The Delegation requested the Assembly to suspend its discussion with respect to the request for observer status by the Wikimedia Foundation (WMF) to WIPO. It pointed out that according to the admission criteria and procedures for obtaining observer status at WIPO, an international NGO should submit a complete list and total number of its national groups or members, showing their country of origin. China noted that in its application documents for observer status, WMF declared that it did not have member organizations but 124 user groups, 39 geographic chapters and two thematic organizations with which it was affiliated. Nevertheless, in accordance with their Wikipedia page, WMF began recognizing chapters and thematic organizations in 2004. If the recognition of a chapter and thematic organization is approved by the Foundation's board, a chapter agreement or Wikimedia thematic organization agreement is signed. As of October 2015, this Foundation had 41 recognized chapters and thematic organizations, one of which was Wikimedia Taiwan, established in Taiwan Province of China. The description of WMF on the Wikimedia website was evidently inconsistent with the application documents submitted by the Foundation to the Assembly for its consideration, and further clarification was thus required. At the same time, China had spotted a large amount of content and disinformation in violation of the one-China principle on the affiliated websites of the Foundation, which contradicted UNGA Resolution 2758 and the consistent position of WIPO on Taiwan-related issues. The Delegation expressed serious concerns over that practice. There was reason to believe that this Foundation had been carrying out political activities through its member organizations, which could undermine the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, it was not fitting for the Foundation to serve as an observer in this professional Organization. The Delegation emphasized that the agenda of the present session had been condensed due to the special circumstances under which the Assemblies were held. Complicated agenda items that required extensive consultations were generally not included. The Delegation welcomed that arrangement, hoping that the same principle could be adhered to during the discussion of all agenda items during the current session. The Delegation recalled further that the Organization, while discussing and making decisions on different agenda items, had always upheld the principle of consensus, including in respect of the discussion of observer status in the past. The Delegation noted that this principle had been applied in the past. Therefore, the Delegation wished to request the Assemblies of WIPO to suspend the discussion on the application of the Foundation for admission to WIPO as an observer, so that the Foundation could further clarify questions regarding the Foundation's member organizations and Taiwan-related positions.

26. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/61/3 and stated that it was prepared to approve all the requests therein. Paragraph 4 of the document set out all requests for observer status that had been received, and contained the requisite information. According to the Group's understanding, that information was meant to enable the consideration and subsequent granting of observer status. The Group understood that the published requests had complied with all proper procedures. Furthermore, the Group understood that all of the organizations listed in the working document met the admission criteria and procedures for applying for observer status at WIPO, as requested by WIPO on its website, otherwise the Secretariat would not have published their applications. The Group said that should that not have been the case, it would ask for clarity from the Legal Counsel on the issue. The Group noted that observer organizations bring technical expertise and insight to the bodies of WIPO. It has been a common practice at WIPO to welcome the involvement of a diversity of NGOs, IGOs, industry groups and other stakeholders as widely as possible in consultation processes and discussions regarding current IP issues. This has been part and parcel of the transparency and

inclusiveness Group B cherished in WIPO. Group B was unaware of any information that would lead them to believe that any of the organizations listed in the document would not be able to bring valuable contributions to the deliberations on current IP issues. The Group therefore urged the approval of the full list of requests for observer status as contained in document A/61/3 before the Assemblies.

27. The Delegation of Pakistan said that it believed that the reservations raised by the Delegation of China should receive attention and it was important to have more information regarding the procedure and the application process. The Delegation stated that, given the unique COVID-related situation and the fact that there was no consensus on the issue, its request would be that the decision on this agenda item, with regard to one particular NGO, be deferred.

28. The Delegation of the United States of America expressed its support to the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and for the full list of observer applications appearing in document A/61/3. In its view, all applicant organizations listed met the requirements requested by WIPO, otherwise the Secretariat would not have published their applications. The Delegation expressed concern that a last-minute question about the observer list did not allow potential observers the ability to respond to misunderstandings about their application. On the application of the Wikimedia Foundation, specifically, the Delegation noted that the international NGO was similar to many other NGOs that had views on copyright-related issues and had already been accepted as WIPO observers. The applicant had already demonstrated its interest in the field of IP and its link to WIPO's work, for example, it had submitted input to the WIPO conversation on artificial intelligence (AI) and IP in response to the call for public input. The Foundation also used the WIPO arbitration and mediation services frequently. The Delegation pointed out that observers were meant to enrich debates and bring views that link to, and support, the activities and objectives of WIPO. The Delegation remarked that it had no information to believe that the applicant would not be able to contribute to meetings, consultations, and debates about current IP issues. The Delegation therefore urged the approval of the organizations listed in document A/61/3 at this session. However, if there was an agreement to simply defer consideration of the NGO's admission, the Delegation would accept that approach. The Delegation pointed out that evaluating an international NGO's credentials for observer status in WIPO was not a one-China issue. The Wikimedia Foundation's participation did not raise any questions about the political status of any other Member States. Allowing the Wikimedia Foundation to participate, as an observer, would be entirely consistent with the established precedent at WIPO of supporting other existing observers and Member States that also have some affiliation with Taiwan. For example, the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Law Association, the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, just to name a few. The Delegation believed that Wikimedia Foundation's observer status should be decided on the merits of its application and its ability to contribute to WIPO's discussion on IP issues.

29. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) took note of the information provided in document A/61/3 which contained the applications received by the Director General from different entities to attend WIPO meetings as observers. It recalled that decisions concerning the admission of observers to the meetings of WIPO had always been made by Member States consensually. The Delegation understood the concern raised by the Delegation of China under the current situation. Since there was no consensus among Member States to grant observer status to one particular entity, its Delegation supported the proposal to postpone and defer the discussion in order to provide more time to analyze the application.

30. The Delegation of the Russian Federation observed that the issue of the admission of observers was a very technical one and pointed out that attempts had been made to resolve the issue involving consultation with Coordinators of the Regional Groups. However, it wished to recall that the procedure adopted in accordance with the established practice of the

Organization did indeed allow delegations, as it was well-known, to look carefully at issues and to ensure that they did not create a precedent by doing something that would not be correct. The Delegation said that, in its view, it was not a correct precedent for the Secretariat to start doing research into the particular issue, but it was up to the Member States to take the decisions. Its Delegation was therefore willing to recognize that this was something Member States had to think about for the future. When further information would be received, then Member States might be in a position to adopt the entity as an observer. The Delegation, however, wished to emphasize that at present all decisions should be taken by consensus. The Delegation was therefore of the view that it would be appropriate to postpone the application for further consideration.

31. The Delegation of Canada expressed its support for the practical inclusion of non-governmental organizations in relevant discussions organized by United Nations (UN) specialized agencies, including WIPO. It was of the view that the eligibility of NGOs to participate in WIPO discussions should be judged on the merits of their request.

32. The Chair took note that there was no consensus reached on the request for admission of Wikimedia Foundation as an observer, and proposed the following decision paragraph, which reflected the proposal contained in document A/61/3, with the exception of the admission of the Wikimedia Foundation, on which a decision had been postponed as consensus had not been reached.

33. The Assemblies of WIPO, each in so far as it is concerned, decided to grant observer status to the following:

- (a) Intergovernmental organization:
  - (i) International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory (INL).
- (b) International non-governmental organizations:
  - (i) Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC);
  - (ii) Brand Owners Protection Group (Gulf BPG);
  - (iii) Independent Alliance for Artists Rights (IAFAR);
  - (iv) Intellectual Property Latin American School (ELAPI);
  - (v) Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT); and
  - (vi) Women@theTable (Women at the Table).
- (c) National non-governmental organizations:
  - (i) French Association of Industrial and Artisanal Geographical Indications (AFIGIA);
  - (ii) Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACs);
  - (iii) Omani Association for Intellectual Property (OAIP); and
  - (iv) Research Center for Innovation-Supported Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (RISE).

34. Reacting to the decision on Agenda Item 6, the Delegation of the United States of America expressed its disappointment that one application for observer status had been deferred due to a last-minute question, despite the fact that the document was published two months ago, leaving adequate time for Member States to consult and provide the concerned NGOs the opportunity to correct any perceived deficiency in their applications prior to these Assemblies. The Delegation said it appreciated that Member States had agreed to a limited agenda of the Assemblies and reiterated its support for the proposed way forward, that is, to revisit the application of the Wikimedia Foundation during the next Assemblies. It strongly encouraged Member States to be more transparent and to voice their concerns in a timely manner in order to alleviate the issue raised in the session, and looked forward to the Assemblies revisiting the issue in the next session.



35. The Delegation of China expressed its appreciation for the draft decision paragraph proposed by the Chair and, at the same time, disagreed with the statement by the Delegation of the United States of America, in particular, on the issue of the one-China policy. As referred by the Delegation of the Russian Federation, and in accordance with precedent regarding the approval procedures for requests of observer status, including the practice in 2012, Member States had the opportunity to raise their different opinions even if the Secretariat had already disseminated particular documents of some of the observers. It recalled that, at that time, as Member States were discussing the issue of one NGO on that list, one of the groups had adopted that practice. The Delegation therefore wished to remind relevant groups to be mindful of their previous practice rather than adopting double standards on the issue.

#### ITEM 7 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS

36. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document WO/CC/78/5).

#### ITEM 8 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### CONVENING OF 2021 EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS

37. Discussions were based on documents A/61/8 and A/61/8 Corr.

38. The Secretariat stated that the agenda item reflected a common commitment on the part of Member States, as well as the Secretariat, to keep the wheel moving. As soon as WIPO had recovered from the first shock of the pandemic, the message from Member States was loud and clear that an attempt should be made to bring normalcy back to the work of the Organization. The Secretariat recalled that, under the leadership of the Chair for the past six months, and under very close guidance of the Director General, the Secretariat undertook extensive and intensive discussions on the agenda for the current Assemblies. It was not an easy task to conduct these meetings given all the safety precautions. Nevertheless, under the guidance of the Chair and the Director General, safe and effective Assemblies were taking place at that stage. The Secretariat said that, during the discussions with Member States, there was a clear message from all regional groups and other Member States that the agenda items that required negotiations, and which were not necessary at this time, should not be included on the agenda. Mindful of that advice, the agenda of the Assemblies adopted the previous morning was truncated, as compared to the initial draft agenda proposed by the Director General on March 20, 2020, and based primarily on feedback received from Member States. The agenda items set aside were basically those to be taken up during an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first half of 2021. Those agenda items were listed in documents A/61/8 and A/61/8 Corr.: Records of WIPO Meetings; Report on the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR); Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP); Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT); Matters Concerning the Convening of a Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Design Law Treaty (DLT); Report on the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) and Review of the Implementation of the Development Agenda Recommendations; Report on the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC); Report on the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS); PCT System; and Lisbon System. The Secretariat indicated that to ensure that the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to be held during the first half of 2021 would be more substantive than the current Assemblies, the

Secretariat had issued a detailed calendar of meetings of its principal committees and working groups. The first meeting would take place on October 5, 2020. The Secretariat hoped that those meetings, to be conducted in the same hybrid format, would take delegations a step closer to substantive discussions and agenda items for the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly, if so agreed during these Assemblies. It went without saying that the evolving situation would be closely monitored and the pandemic borne in mind. The Secretariat stressed that everyone was making its best effort to ensure that the work of the Organization, including its normative work, continues to move on seamlessly and smoothly. The Secretariat indicated that it was with this intent, as well as the Chair's guidance, that this agenda item was included for consideration by Member States.

39. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of the Group of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC), supported the idea of convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first quarter of 2021 to consider the issues that had not been possible to consider during this hybrid format session. On the timing, the Delegation suggested that it should not be earlier than March next year to give sufficient time to prepare for this item. With regard to issues as copyright, and issues relating to industrial designs and industrial property, the Group also believed there were a number of detailed matter that needed to be prepared. Referring to document A/61/8 and its Annex, the Delegation took note of the necessary information provided. The epidemiological situation was uncertain, but once that issue was resolved, the Delegation hoped that it would be possible to return to a traditional work format.

40. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, extended its gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/61/8. The Group was cognizant that the COVID-19 had had serious disruptive consequences on the work of WIPO. The Group appreciated the exceptional contingency measures applied by the Secretariat in suspending all Member States meetings from March 2020. With the exception of a few delegations, COVID-19 had made it impossible for delegates and experts to travel to attend meetings. The disease had also resulted in a limited resumption of work through hybrid meetings, which were part virtual and part physical. The Group had shown its determination for the work of the Organization to continue in a reasonable and realistic manner. The hybrid format posed significant challenges for members of the African Group, as the technology and digital divide often precluded fair and adequate participation of experts from capitals. The Group appealed to Member States to show flexibility and accommodation for the unique challenges faced by individual Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. The African Group acknowledged the need for convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to discuss substantive work and to try to tackle the backlog of issues under negotiations, and agreed to the principle of the decision. However, for the purposes of inclusivity, transparency and efficiency, the Group was of the view that Member States needed to be consulted, in particular, on the format and the agenda of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly, to ensure that the envisaged Assemblies was effective and to allow all Member States to participate actively and on equal footing.

41. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/61/8. While it was mindful of the health and safety considerations on the WIPO campus, and the inconvenience caused to delegates participating in sessions virtually from different time zones, the Group affirmed its commitment to resuming the substantive intergovernmental work at WIPO following the hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping in mind the importance of ensuring inclusivity for capital-based experts, Group B supported the convening of the 2021 Extraordinary Sessions as a moment to take stock as well as give direction to various WIPO substantive and normative bodies. The Group said that it was important that the momentum and good progress made in the Organization was not be compromised by the unprecedented circumstances. The Group indicated that solutions to the problems faced existed, noting that intergovernmental work in other organizations, including technical agencies, had resumed and that Chairs, delegates and secretariats were

given opportunities to deliver on their duties, both physically in Geneva and virtually from capitals. The Group stated that at the PBC earlier that month, delegations were also able to come together to take decisions on a number of key issues, demonstrating that deliberation and consensus was also possible at WIPO. This showed that, even if it was not possible to know how long and how restrictive the situation would continue, delegations were on the right track and it should make delegations ready to face this new reality and model for work. The Group recalled that the purpose of the Assemblies was both to take stock of the Organization's work and to set the direction of travel. One of the priorities at present should be to focus on how to proceed and to organize work in the upcoming committees and meetings scheduled between October and February. The Group called on the membership to re-engage in substantive discussions on the issues covered by those committees and meetings. It hoped that the prospects of holding an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly would give Member States some impetus to engage in substantive work and encourage discussions beyond housekeeping matters. Given the current uncertainties, the Group proposed that a final decision on whether to hold an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was taken instead during the Extraordinary Session of the Coordination Committee expected to take place in the last months of 2020. By that time, delegations would have a clearer picture of how the Extraordinary Sessions could meet the objectives of taking stock of work and giving overall direction to its subsidiary bodies. The Group said that the resilience, creativity and flexibility of delegations would be essential to ensure WIPO could come through this unprecedented situation without losing the time, goodwill and traction gained through so much hard work over the years. The Group reaffirmed its commitment in this endeavor.

42. The Delegation of Panama, speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), joined other regional groups in acknowledging the importance of keeping the momentum of work within the Organization. The Group noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected the way in which delegations worked; such an example was the truncated agenda of these Assemblies. Given the challenges delegations were facing, which made it impossible to completely conduct their work, the Group believed that it was important to consider holding an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the future to consider the agenda items that had not been dealt with substantially at this session. The Group requested that the possible holding of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was coordinated with consultations with Member States to discuss various aspects regarding the organization, including health and safety measures, issues connected with the agenda, and the aim of guaranteeing a meeting where delegations could achieve concrete results.

43. The Delegation of El Salvador supported the statement made by the Delegation of Panama, on behalf of GRULAC. As stated in its general statement, the Delegation attached considerable importance to moving the Organization's normative agenda forward. The Delegation was aware that the COVID-19 pandemic had made it very difficult to move forward discussions in the various WIPO Committees. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for all its efforts in proposing alternative means of participation and alternative sessions, and making use of the best technologies available, including in these current series of meetings. The Delegation recognized that it was all very new and that many delegations believed that these methods could not replace the personal interaction required to undertake certain types of discussions and negotiations. However, no-one knew how long the crisis would last and how it would evolve, as well as whether it would be possible to travel in the first part of next year to enable delegates from capitals to have face-to-face meetings. In spite of that scenario, the Delegation underscored its conviction that work of the Organization had to go forward, and therefore supported the proposal to postpone substantive discussions of items to a possible extraordinary session in the first part of 2021. The Delegation hoped that this would not be postponed again even if travel restrictions continue to be applied in the next few months. It said that delegations needed to see leadership of the Secretariat together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the different WIPO bodies and Committees, and it fully trusted the Secretariat to meet that requirement. The Delegation encouraged members to provide WIPO the support, and

participate actively to facilitate the work. As previous speakers mentioned, the Delegation was also open to continue dialogue on this issue.

44. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea supported the Secretariat's proposal on the convening of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly during the first half of 2021. Given that WIPO was the global forum for international IP services, policy information and cooperation, the Delegation believed that the physical presence of Member States would be required for the discussion of the international norm setting and global IP services. The Delegation requested that the Secretariat closely monitor the progress of COVID-19, and choose a convening date accordingly.

45. The Delegation of Chile supported the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation said that it was important to keep up the momentum of work within the Organization as pointed out by other speakers. The Delegation believed that it was important to have a window open in order to make it possible for bodies of WIPO that had not been able to submit their reports during the session to have an opportunity to do so. It pointed out the need to have a prior agreement between Member States and the Secretariat on how delegations could work to keep up the work, as well as being mindful of the risks of holding hybrid format meetings. In that regard, the Delegation believed that it was important to balance that risk, including the risk of spreading the virus for delegates and the members of the Secretariat.

46. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia supported the holding of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in 2021.

47. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Secretariat for presenting the document and for its explanation. In principle, the Delegation supported the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to consider the situation and to bring on track the substantive discussion of work. Bearing in mind the persistent uncertainties caused by the global pandemic, the Delegation believed that there was the need to monitor the progress and the development, and to make a final decision on the dates, format and agenda items of the extraordinary sessions accordingly.

48. The Delegation of Japan supported the statement delivered by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents. The Delegation supported the convening of the 2021 Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly to discuss the remaining agenda items. However, the sessions should be carefully scheduled taking into full account the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Delegation stated that, if those sessions were convened in a hybrid format with both physical and virtual participation, virtual participants would be subject to constraints, such as time differences. The Delegation stated that in order to minimize the impact of those constraints, the time of the sessions should be reduced as much as possible. The Delegation would appreciate receiving very clear and detailed information on the policy for the sessions.

49. The Chair proposed to adopt the decision presented in document A/61/8 and corrected in document A/61/8 Corr.

50. The Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that it believed that Group B's statement was clear about the support of the convening of the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly. However, the Delegation believed that it would be appropriate to have more clarity and information after the scheduled sessions in the autumn of that year, and that it would be a good opportunity to convene the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly at the Coordination Committee. The Delegation believed that the Convention allowed the process to take place, and that the Coordination Committee could play a role in convening or making a

decision on convening the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the Delegation also understood that the corrigendum that was circulated did not include some agenda items which its Group believed to be useful for discussions, namely the Madrid Union and the Hague Union. The Delegation sought the indulgence of the Secretariat to clarify the proposed decision and possibly alter the language slightly.

51. The Chair said that, to his knowledge, the procedures concerning the convening of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was in principle decided by the Member States, then it was up to the Director General and the Chair to convene an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly four months in advance before 2021. The Chair stated that given the circumstances described by delegations, Member States would be consulted before convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly. The Chair noted that the request was to formalize such a decision within the body of the Organization and, to his knowledge, it was not a precondition in the Rules of the Organization. However, it was up to the Member States to decide on those issues. The Chair requested the Legal Counsel to elaborate on those aspects.

52. The Legal Counsel confirmed that the WIPO Convention sets out the process to be followed for the convocation of the Extraordinary General Assembly. He referred delegations to Article 6.4(b), which sets out that the General Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session upon convocation by the Director General either at the request of the Coordination Committee or at the request of one fourth of the States members of the General Assembly. The Legal Counsel indicated that the basis for the document that was currently on the agenda was found in the second part of the provision, and that similar provisions were found in treaties with respect to other assemblies. Furthermore, he stated that if the decision would be adopted, then the legal requirements necessary for the convocation by the Director General would be fulfilled. The Legal Counsel stated that those requirements were set out in the General Rules of Procedure, Rules 3 and 4.

53. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Legal Counsel and the Chair for their explanations. The Group requested more time to consider the decision due to the fact that the decision language cited the corrigendum which was circulated the previous day. Although it was a simple corrigendum, the Group needed to consult its capitals and make sure that it does not alter the notion of the decision itself. The Group said it would appreciate a bit more time to consider the suggested language.

54. The Chair requested the Delegation of the United Kingdom to revert with its Group's answer at the beginning of the afternoon session.

55. The Delegation said it would try its best to get an answer.

56. The Secretariat clarified that this was an indicative agenda and was not cast in stone. The Secretariat said that in the corrected document the Hague Union was only removed because the Hague Union was being considered in this session. The Secretariat recalled that a provisional agenda was issued by the Director General in March and a truncated agenda was issued later. After the September 4<sup>th</sup> meeting it was decided to include the Madrid Union and the Hague Union to the agenda of this session. The Chair pointed out that the Hague Union was removed the previous day because the Hague Union was to be considered in this session. Hence, it was the provisional minus the truncated. Nevertheless, as stated by all delegations, it was extremely clear that each and every agenda item that would ultimately feature for the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly would be in consultation with Member States. The Secretariat reiterated that it was only indicative, as done for ordinary sessions. The document for the ordinary sessions indicates four agenda items such as Admission of Observers, Election of Officers etc., therefore the Secretariat did not see the need to hold back a decision for this technical reason.

57. The Chair shared the view of the Secretariat's statement and recalled that discussions were held on this point that morning, and other delegations had requested to be consulted on the agenda of the extraordinary session. The Chair asked the Group if it was satisfied with the Secretariat's explanations to enable the meeting to formalize the decision immediately instead of the afternoon.

58. The Delegation of the Russian Federation said that it had requested the floor earlier before hearing the exhaustive explanations of the Chair, the Legal Counsel and the Secretariat. The Delegation stated that it was entirely satisfied with the explanations, and recommended to adopt the draft decision as previously submitted. The Delegation said that if there was any new proposal, it would certainly have to consider that very carefully. However, if any new proposals were put forward, they should first be shared with regional coordinators.

59. The Delegation of the United Kingdom said that it did not want to take anybody's rights away and in the least for itself. The Delegation thanked the Chair for the clarifications. The Delegation stated that it was sufficiently convinced. However, fortunately or unfortunately, it was not the sole decision maker in the UN system, let alone Group B. In that regard, it would like to have clarification before it engaged with its Group and capital. The Delegation understood that the decision read out was a decision to convene. While the Delegation understood that the basis of the agenda was indicative, the decision to convene was a difficult decision. The Delegation asked whether that decision bounds the Organization or the Director General to convene the Extraordinary General Assembly or if it was also indicative. If in a couple of months, delegations decided that it should be convened later or in a different format, would delegations still be able to alter that scenario, and was the decision binding?

60. The Chair recalled that as expressed by everybody it would be governed by the conditions towards the pandemic. The Chair said that delegations express its strong will to convene an Extraordinary General Assembly in this session and to take a decision. The Chair recalled that the Secretariat had announced the meetings to be held as of the following week, paving the way for all to work. The Chair noted that all delegations who contributed to the dialogue expressed this strong will, including the Delegation of the United Kingdom, to tackle the substantive issues at hand. That was the Chair's understanding, and he did not wish to give a sole understanding. However, his understanding of this decision was to obtain the consensus of all. The Chair stressed that the Extraordinary General Assembly would be held with an agenda that would be discussed before being formally adopted, under the conditions of the rules of the host State and the Secretariat. The Chair asked the Delegation of the United Kingdom whether he wished to consult its Group or whether the explanations provided by the Legal Counsel, the Secretariat and himself were sufficient.

61. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B announced that Group B would meet in the afternoon.

62. The Delegation of Chile said it was persuaded by the language proposed by the Chair, and it had the same understanding that had been confirmed by Secretariat and the Chair. In the hope to swiftly resolving the situation, the Delegation suggested that the decision language could refer to consultations with Member States to reassure the Delegation of the United Kingdom.

63. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Chile for its contribution and for stating its understanding. The Chair stated that the Organization was guided by consensus and he believed that there was consensus but that the decision was important. The Chair recalled the importance of expressing the strong will and the need to maintain the trend of the Organization, which was highly stressed at the start of the debate.

64. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, pointed out that the Annex mentioned “items to be included” and that this may result in some misinterpretation. In an effort to move the discussion forward, the Delegation suggested that the decision could read “that items that could be considered in the draft Consolidated Agenda”.
65. The Chair adjourned the meeting.
66. On reopening the agenda item, the Chair recalled that some observations were made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B, on the decision proposed for adoption on the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly.
67. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, expressed its deepest appreciation to the Chair for allowing its Group more time to consult on the proposed draft decision, which differed to the one in document A/61/8 by a margin. The Delegation stated that it wanted to seek comfort with the Group or its ability to accept. In those consultations, the Group tried to bring as little change as possible to the draft proposed in the morning, and the Group arrived in capturing the discussion within discussion in the morning. The proposed decision read as follows, “The Assemblies of WIPO each as far as it is concerned request the Director General of WIPO to convene Extraordinary Sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on agenda including but not limited to items contained in document A/61/8”. The Delegation indicated that two changes made were the insertion of the words “but not limited to” to show clearly that there could be some changes. Another suggested change to the language was to refer to the original document and not to the corrigendum circulated the previous day. The Delegation informed that the draft was shared with other groups in the last 25 minutes ago, and therefore, it sought the views of the colleagues in the meeting or if the Chair would allow discussions to take place outside of the meeting.
68. The Chair thanked the Delegation of the United Kingdom for its declaration and proposals. As mentioned by the Delegation that those proposals were limited in form, the Chair preferred to have the first reactions in the meeting, if there were no substantive remarks or objections, it could help to reach a decision and consider a way forward. The Chair requested if there were any observations on the change or amendment proposed by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Chair repeated the amendment proposed by Group B to be included in the last line of the paragraph “but not limited to the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8”. The Chair hoped this would accommodate delegations. Furthermore, the Chair expressed his personal view on this issue globally, not only on those amendments, by pointing out that delegations were not having a debate on substantive issues in convening an Extraordinary General Assembly. The Chair said that this was approached in a consultative way as usual.
69. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, confirmed that it had seen the proposal of Group B and agreed on its concept. However, the Group would like to include the words “indicative list of items contained in the document” to reflect to all delegates that the Annex was actually an indicative list. Thus, the Group proposed for it to read “based on the indicative list of items contained in document A/61/8”. The Group reiterated its agreement with the spirit of what Group B had proposed, and wanted to reflect that what was in the document was indicative.
70. The Chair requested the Delegation of Singapore to clarify whether it was not retaining the language proposed by the Delegation of the United Kingdom but replacing it by indicative.
71. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asian and the Pacific Group, explained that it had tried to work around the text but the language seemed a bit clumsy. Hence, the initial language was “based on an agenda including the indicative list of items contained in document A/61/8”.

72. The Delegation of Chile pointed out that virtual participants had difficulties following the wording suggestions made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B and the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. In that regard, the Delegation indicated that it would be useful and beneficial for all for the redrafting exercise to be projected on the screen to enable delegations to follow the discussion. The Delegation understood that the proposal of the Asia and the Pacific Group was not an exclusion of the proposal of the Delegation of the United Kingdom – the inclusion would be “based on an agenda including but not limited to the indicative list contained in document A/61/8”. The Delegation said that both could work and that delegations could include both elements and consolidate, including the Delegations point.

73. The Chair recalled the hectic agenda for that day and the next. The Chair pointed out that it was not possible to enter into direct negotiations on the wording of each document. However, he believed that delegations were very close to reach a decision on Agenda Item 8. The Chair indicated that there were three alternatives on the table, including the Delegation of Chile’s proposal to mix the two amendments presented by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B, and the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Chair inquired if delegations agreed with the proposal of the Delegation of Chile.

74. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, stated that the decision in document A/61/8 as proposed by Group B indicated that there would be consultations on the agenda before the envisaged Extraordinary General Assembly. The Delegation agreed to the principle that the agenda should be negotiated. However, in its statement, the Delegation had requested that consultations also be on format, as members of its Group had substantial reservations on certain formats of meetings, especially virtual or hybrid meetings for substantive negotiations. Given the legalistic nature that the discussion was now taking, the Group would have to consult on the need to include language which would also cater its interest. The Group stated that it was very flexible, recalling that it had agreed to the decision initially proposed by the Chair, on the understanding that the Chair would conduct consultations together with the Secretariat and Member States. However, the Group believed that the nature that the discussion was now taking might be a bit too legalistic. The Group requested clarification on the effects in terms of the Group’s concerns, particularly, on the format of the meeting.

75. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, signaled that the suggestion proposed by the Delegation of Chile seemed reasonable, and it believed that it took into consideration the amendments proposed by both Group B and the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Group believed that it would be able to agree to that language.

76. The Chair appealed to the flexibility of all to revert to the decision proposed that morning and to adopt it, with the understanding that this debate would help delegations in the next period, if ever the Extraordinary General Assembly was convened, with circumstances permitting. The Chair noted that delegations had the same understanding about what to do together to prepare such an Extraordinary General Assembly. The Chair appealed to delegations to stick to the decision as read that morning. He believed that it was the best way to reach consensus. The Chair understood and thanked all the delegations who tried to make the decision clearer, but he believed that there was no ambiguities in that text. The Chair reiterated his plea to show flexibility and to adopt the decision as read that morning. The Chair read the proposed decision again “The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, requested the Director General of WIPO to convene extraordinary sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on an agenda including the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8, as corrected in document A/61/8 Corr.”

77. The Delegation of the United Kingdom thanked the Chair for his efforts. The Delegation hoped that delegations were nearly there at the end. Speaking on behalf of Group B, the



Delegation said it gathered from the members of Group B that, the fact that the corrigendum introduced would suggest that it was important to delete the Hague System for some reason, which the Group did not believe was the case. The Delegation had thanked the Chair for the explanations and noted that the list was indicative, but Group B believe that the reference to the corrigendum should not be made in the decision.

78. The Chair stated that he had no problem with Group B's proposal if other delegations accepted the proposal. The Chair recalled that the Secretariat's explanation on that issue was also given that morning. However, he asked if delegations could accommodate that request. The Chair asked delegations to reconsider the same paragraph, without "as corrected in document A/61/8 Corr." It was so agreed.

79. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, requested the Director General of WIPO to convene extraordinary sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on an agenda including the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8."

#### ITEM 9 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### DRAFT AGENDAS FOR 2021 ORDINARY SESSIONS

80. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document WO/CC/78/5).

#### ITEM 10 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### REPORTS ON AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

(i) Report by the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC)

81. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document WO/GA/53/9).

(ii) Report by the External Auditor

82. Discussions were based on documents A/61/5 and A/61/6.

83. On behalf of the External Auditor, Mr. Damian Brewitt, Director, National Audit Office of the United Kingdom, delivered his report as follows:

"On behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General of the United Kingdom, I am pleased to have this opportunity to present the findings from our audit directly to you, the governing body. It is important to us that we engage you in the issues we highlight from our audit, which is undertaken to give you independent and objective insight in accordance with the Terms of Reference under which we are appointed.

"In my presentation I will cover the three main areas of our work, firstly the audit of the financial statements and financial management, and then I will cover the two substantive topics which are contained in our report, namely governance and internal control and the External Office network, the latter as a matter of significant interest for Member States.

"Turning first to the results of our audit of the financial statements, I am pleased to confirm that the External Auditor's opinion was unqualified, and that the audit revealed no errors or weaknesses which we considered material to the accuracy, completeness, and

validity of the Financial Statements as a whole. Our audit also focuses on whether the transactions have occurred in line with the Financial Regulations set by Member States. Our opinion also confirms this was satisfactory.

“WIPO’s financial statements and accompanying financial commentary were prepared to a high quality and key accounting judgements were supported by detailed analysis. WIPO has undertaken a review of its Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements to streamline the content, focusing on the significant aspects of financial performance and financial health. We worked with management to help secure changes which have been achieved within the reporting requirements of IPSAS and we consider these changes are positive in removing extraneous detail.

“Overall our audit results were positive and identified no significant errors or control weaknesses. We reported the detail of this work to the IAOC and the PBC.

“On financial management, over the last five years the net assets of WIPO have increased by some 78.1 per cent, largely driven by increased use of the patent systems. WIPO continues to enjoy a strong financial position and positive cashflows, supported by a steady pipeline of future revenue streams. Despite the pandemic, we have continued to see a strong pipeline of applications in early 2020 and management expect this to continue. Together with the healthy reserves position and relatively high levels of cash resources which could be liquidated at short notice, we concluded that management’s assertion around the going concern of WIPO remained appropriate. The Organization is well placed to weather the current uncertainty.

“Moving now to the first topic area of our performance reporting which speaks to the issues of governance and internal control, which provide Member States with confidence and assurance over the management of resources.

“WIPO has continued its positive and proactive approach to developing sound governance mechanisms. In our experience we consider that they remain at the forefront of developments within the wider-UN system.

“During 2019, WIPO continued to explore the use of analytical techniques to confirm compliance with internal controls at the entity and process level and to demonstrate the continuing effectiveness of the internal control framework. WIPO has engaged consultants to further develop analytic tools and has identified 20 areas where it expects to deploy analytics to support internal controls during 2020. Management considers that its control environment has continued to function normally during the lockdown period within the virtual operating environment which it has deployed. We will consider the operation of the control environment during the lockdown period as part of next year’s audit.

“WIPO’s Statement on Internal Control continues to be a strong source of assurance for Member States. The processes outlined earlier to assure the effective operation of controls provides a sound basis for the Director General to opine on their effectiveness with the control self-assessment process indicating continued improvement. Some 89 per cent of process controls were considered deployed and operational. In our view, WIPO can further develop the Statement by providing greater prominence to planned improvements and by looking to future risks. The alignment of Internal Oversight Division’s reporting cycle in 2020, in line with our previous recommendation, will further enhance the Statement in future years.

“During 2019, WIPO made further advances in the area of fraud prevention and detection, delivering 15 of the 17 objectives in its anti-fraud Roadmap. Work is planned

to link fraud risks to existing controls in order to identify gaps in the control framework. Fraud risks have been included within the Enterprise Risk Management System. Giving these risks greater visibility will ensure a focus on mitigation measures. Some 89 per cent of staff have now undertaken mandatory fraud awareness training, which is significantly better than comparators within the wider UN system. Overall, WIPO continues to be proactive in its approach to fraud prevention.

“Turning now to our observations on WIPO’s the External Office network, we are aware that Member States plan to commission an external review of the network. In support of this, we reviewed the current approach to the development of the Network and how performance is reported and monitored within WIPO’s results-based framework.

“In 2019, the network consisted of six offices, with a further office opening in January 2020. The activities of each office vary, and overall budgeted spend for 2019 was 8.5 million Swiss francs. The full cost is understated, however, as the contributions and support from the host countries is not valued and reported in the financial statements.

“Our review identified the absence of a clear strategy to underpin the development of the network. We would expect such a strategy to focus on the priority and value attached to a location in achieving WIPO’s overall strategic objectives. This should incorporate flexibility to expand or contract the network as necessary, as objectives are met and evolve. There is also an absence of clear weighted criteria to inform the decision-making processes.

“The role of the Secretariat in supporting Member States decision making is limited. The Secretariat provide a basic ‘factual report’, without recommendations. Proposals for new offices are not submitted in a consistent format and consequently there a limited basis for an objective comparison. In our view, this has contributed to protracted discussions on the development of the network. We have recommended that a clear strategy, focused on cost effective delivery against the primary objectives of the Organization, should be developed. A more active role for the Secretariat in this process should also be considered, while retaining the final decision making by Member States.

“WIPO has a process in place to manage the external office network to avoid duplication, maximize value and to ensure appropriate and proportionate oversight from Geneva. We have identified the importance of ensuring the whole network is integrated with Regional Bureau and the Offices, sharing workplans and exchanging information working in partnership with headquarters. We see scope for further enhancement to internal reporting and for a greater focus on measuring performance against programme and budget workplans. There would also be value in the validation of the outcomes and performance of the external offices.

“Accountability of the External Office network can be enhanced by considering a more focused emphasis on individual workplans and associated indications of impact. Alongside the more common measures applied across all offices, we see benefit in a more tailored framework to reflect local priorities. We have also recommended that indicators are developed to measure the satisfaction of key stakeholders in the locality as an extension to the wider WIPO Perception Survey. Better data will inform Member States on whether offices are achieving their objectives.

“This Committee has agreed to an evaluation of the network of external offices in 2021. We believe our report sets out some areas where the evaluation could focus to enhance the data available to better inform the decisions of the Member States on the future

evolution of the network. As part of our future audit work we will review the actions taken by WIPO as a consequence of this evaluation.

“To conclude, I can confirm that progress was made in closing and implementing 10 recommendations from previous years, with 13 recommendations remaining in progress. Many of these have quite extended implementation dates, with limited substantive activity in 2019. We are mindful of the challenging circumstances this year but believe there is scope for WIPO to assess the potential for earlier implementation or to reassess the continued applicability of previous recommendations which remain outstanding.

“Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the Director General and his staff for their support and co-operation in facilitating our audit. The 2019 audit was particularly challenging with the need for remote working, and the efforts of WIPO staff to support the audit have enabled us to ensure we can meet your expected reporting timetable.

“Thank you for your kind attention and I would be happy to take any questions or to provide further background to our audit. Thank you.”

84. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea expressed its appreciation to the External Auditor for its hard work in preparing the report in the difficult environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation generally agreed with the recommendations made by the External Auditor, especially for those parts that dealt with external offices. The report by the External Auditor provided various useful pieces of information. Therefore, this report should be taken into account in the decision making process on the terms of reference for the evaluation of the entire network of WIPO External Offices. The Delegation was very pleased with the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session item 16 decision which, “...recommended to the General Assembly to request the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) to decide during its 32<sup>nd</sup> session in 2021 the Terms of Reference of such an evaluation, taking into account all relevant documents including but not limited to, the report by the External Auditor...”

85. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, wished to address items 10(i), (ii) and (iii). The Group expressed its gratitude to the Chair and the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents under those items. The Group congratulated the Secretariat on an unqualified audit report for 2019. The oversight checks and balances were integral to inculcate the culture of ethical governance within the Organization and there were various recommendations which served to ensure a more efficient and productive Organization. The Group reiterated its comments from the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session, and underscored the importance of Member States briefings by the IAOC and it encouraged greater interaction. With regard to external offices, the Group was of the view that some of the recommendations made by the External Auditor were relevant and could be of assistance among the relevant documents for drafting the terms of reference of the evaluation of the entire network of WIPO External Offices. However, the Group was of the view that such an evaluation should take into account Member States' guidance and inputs and be conducted in an open, transparent manner, and be consistent with the development dimensions that WIPO was pursuing through its programs and activities, including with regard to the implementation of the Development Agenda recommendations. The Group emphasized the importance of the topic given that Africa currently had two external offices in Algeria and Nigeria. The Group called for the alignment of the newly opened offices with the external offices network in terms of resources and programs.

86. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, thanked the External Auditor for his report and was happy to note the conclusion that the financial reporting in WIPO was of a very high standard. The Group also noted the effectiveness of the anti-fraud system as well as the internal control. The Group happily noted that WIPO had a sound financial basis and financial surpluses which meant that the Organization was well placed to withstand market uncertainties. The Group also noted that a high proportion of previously made

recommendations had been fulfilled and hoped that those that remained outstanding would be implemented in the near future. As for the recommendation about the operation of the external office network, the Group believed that a strategy should be drafted that would be fully in line with the overall strategic gains of the Organization. In view of the indicators of productivity, which were used in assessing national and regional offices, the feedback between the offices and headquarters should be looked at as this could be used in assessing the real contribution made by the external offices to the Member States' overall work. When considering the way in which the work of some of the offices might be assessed, the Group believed that some recommendations given could be very useful. Considering there was a large thematic document on the operation of the external offices, it was one that was adopted by consensus and there were a lot of things in that report that were useful and could be looked at in a constructive manner. The Group hoped to continue with a constructive mandate which would allow Member States to determine exactly what criteria would be used in assessing the work of these external offices. The Group also hoped to do so in the intersessional period so that at the PBC session in 2021, there would be a draft of such a document that would be used as the basis for that assessment.

87. The Delegation of China thanked the External Auditor for the annual report. The Delegation acknowledged and appreciated the effective work done by the External Auditor. With regard to the sound recommendations on the evaluation of external offices, the Delegation agreed with the decisions made at the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session and reiterated that the establishment of the evaluation plan should fully take into consideration the views of the External Auditor and the Member States. The Delegation would continue to engage with all parties on the issue.

88. The Delegation of Algeria thanked the External Auditor for his report and commended him on the work done in giving a clear picture as to the financial statements of WIPO in accordance with the audit standards. The Delegation was happy that the Organization was well placed to move forward to promote a healthy, transparent and efficient management policy. The Delegation noted the External Auditor's remarks that WIPO was well placed to survive in the climate of uncertainty created by COVID-19. Nonetheless, the Delegation stated that the oversight function would remain particularly important and called for vigilance concerning the possible impacts of the pandemic on the world and on WIPO. The Delegation congratulated the Secretariat on steps taken to formalize the approach to management of the network of external offices, which was highlighted in the External Auditor's report. The Delegation congratulated WIPO on the External Auditor's remarks about improving the overall framework for the management of the external offices, in particular on how best to assess the impact of the offices and how to ensure that it could be even better in the future. The Delegation recalled that the External Auditor talked about tailored programs to reflect local priorities and improving the work plans and programs that were elaborated by the external offices. The Delegation believed that it was just as important to ensure that the newly established offices in Africa would be systematically integrated with the ongoing work with greater alignment of human resources in terms of the external offices and headquarters. It should be ensured that if they were truly to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they needed to be given resources and needed to be given leeway to adapt their activities in the course of the year in light of the needs of the countries that they served. The Delegation believed it was crucial to think about program sharing and experience sharing involving the different existing offices in order to optimize best practices within the network.

89. The Delegation of the Russian Federation endorsed the statement made by its Regional Group and expressed gratitude to the External Auditor for the work that had been done and the report that had been prepared. The Delegation was happy to note the positive assessment of the quality of the financial statements produced by WIPO and the progress in improving the internal control system. The Delegation positively viewed the stable, robust financial position of the Organization and the fact that there were sufficient reserves to guarantee stability, even at a time of general economic slowdown. The Delegation thanked the External Auditor for the

recommendation on the external offices and the proposal for a mandate for evaluation. The Delegation explained that it supported some of the recommendations, in particular, those relating to developing a strategy for external offices and the diversification of indicators that are used to assess work on accountability. Some of the conclusions could also be taken into account when developing a mandate for the assessment of the evaluation. However, the Delegation believed that the idea of narrowing the way in which those offices worked, perhaps giving them very specific tasks, might lead to narrowing the overall range of the work done by the offices in general and might undermine their efficiency. Concerning a balance of responsibilities and decision making, the Delegation believed that all decisions taken with reference to the network of offices had to be taken by Member States. The network of external offices had been an effective instrument to implement WIPO programs and was effective in working with the headquarters of the Organization. The external offices had a significant role to play in enhancing accessibility to WIPO services and raising its profile. The external offices had operated in different regions with different kinds of languages and with different situations. The Delegation hoped to continue to discuss the matter of the assessment mandate constructively in the intersessional period.

90. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the External Auditor for presenting the report and noted with satisfaction the External Auditor's opinion that WIPO's revenue and expenses had been applied to the purposes intended by the WIPO General Assembly. It was also pleased that financial transactions conformed to the Organization's Financial Regulations and Rules. The Delegation was cognizant of WIPO's sufficient and appropriate cooperation with the External Auditor. With regard to financial performance, the Delegation further noted that WIPO passed another successful financial period in 2019 and continued to enjoy a strong financial position and positive cashflows supported by a steady pipeline of future revenue streams. The Delegation was satisfied that despite the pandemic, WIPO had received a strong pipeline of applications in early 2020. Concerning governance and internal control, the Delegation was of the view that those mechanisms were essential tools which provided the Director General and Member States with assurances to enable them to discharge their oversight responsibilities and to safeguard resources. The Delegation continued to note the strength of WIPO's internal controls and further positive developments that had taken place in 2019. The Delegation noted the comment made by the External Auditor on the WIPO network of external offices and recalled that the majority of the recommendations were accepted by the Secretariat. The Delegation also noted the Secretariat's responses to recommendations two and three, which were consistent with the Member States decisions. The Delegation recalled that according to the WIPO General Assembly decision, the opening of new external offices is subject to the decision by Member States and was a Member State-driven process.

91. The External Auditor thanked the Delegations for their comments and noted that those would be reflected in the follow-up of recommendations as part of the 2020 audit. The External Auditor appreciated the comments from Delegations with regard to the external offices sharing elements of good practice within their network, and believed that this would be something useful for WIPO to take forward.

92. The Director General thanked the External Auditor and his team for their work in the very challenging circumstances in 2020 for the 2019 audit. It was a considerable amount of work and the Organization was extremely grateful to the External Auditor for the thorough approach to that task. The Director General also extended thanks to the IAOC concerning item 10(i) and deeply appreciated their work.

93. The General Assembly and other Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO took note of the "Report by the External Auditor" (document A/61/5).

(iii) Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD)

94. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document WO/GA/53/9).

ITEM 11 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM AND BUDGET COMMITTEE (PBC)

95. Discussions were based on document A/61/6.

96. The Chair noted that the item covered all previous matters except the reports on Audit and Oversight, which would be discussed under Agenda Item 10.

97. The Secretariat stated that as 2020 was a non-budget year, only one session of the PBC was held, which was the 31<sup>st</sup> Session held from September 7 to 11, 2020. The PBC agenda covered a number of items, including Audit and Oversight matters, Performance and Financial Review, items and proposals following decisions of the 2019 Assemblies and, respectively, the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the PBC. Some specific items discussed by the Member States during the PBC were to be addressed separately under Agenda Item 10. Those items included: the Report by the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee; the Report by the External Auditor; and the Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division. Member States engaged very constructively throughout the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the PBC with the Secretariat and took note or recommended for approval by the Assemblies, a number of items, as listed in document A/61/6. Those items included: the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) Recommendations; the WIPO Performance Report 2018/19; the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) Validation Report of the WIPO Performance Report for 2018/2019; the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Membership; the Supplementary Capital Master Plan Projects; and the Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements 2019 and the Status of the Payment of Contributions as at June 30, 2020. In that connection, document A/61/INF/4 provided an update to the Status of the Payment of Contributions and Working Capital Funds as at August 31, 2020. Furthermore, since September 1 and as of September 21, the following contributions had been received: Gabon, 22 Swiss francs and Saint. Vincent and the Grenadines 2,849 Swiss francs. On the WIPO Policy on Languages, the PBC took note that the Secretariat would require more time to prepare the Revised WIPO Policy on Languages, due to the impact of COVID-19, which adversely affected the required consultations on the policy with stakeholders and Member States. The PBC requested the Secretariat to submit a comprehensive revised version of the Policy on Languages at the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the PBC, including a sustainable roadmap for a phased multi-year implementation. The PBC also took note of the Analysis on the Management of WIPO's Funds-in-Trust (FIT), including the key principles, which would be reflected in WIPO's revised internal Policy on FIT. Finally, there were two PBC 31 Agenda Items, which were a follow up of decisions of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the PBC, the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the PBC, and the 2019 Assemblies of WIPO Member States, including the Terms of Reference of the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices and the Methodology for Allocation of Income and Expenditure by Union. As those items required extensive consultations both internally and with Member States, and it had not been possible to do so due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PBC requested that those items be deferred to the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the PBC in 2021.

98. The Chair, on behalf of all delegations, thanked Mr. Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General (ADG), for his long standing and outstanding contribution to WIPO. The ADG had been well-known for having many years of experience in international organizations, and dealing with vital issues for the organizations, all during his professional tenure. The Chair recognized that his contribution, together with that of his team, had been a strong pillar for WIPO, and hoped that he would always keep on supporting international organizations as he

had done throughout his career. The Chair recalled that the delegations had already engaged very constructively and had had ample opportunity to express their views on all these matters at the PBC session held two weeks prior. The statements of the PBC had been duly recorded and would be reproduced entirely in the report. Those statements did not necessarily have to be made again at the Assemblies but, of course, it was the delegations' right and freedom to do so if they preferred. Delegations were asked to refer to those interventions for the sake of efficiency, as it was not necessary to take the floor to endorse or repeat statements made by Regional Coordinators. The Chair opened the floor to delegations on the matters covered by the Secretariat's presentation on PBC matters with the exception of the reports on audit and oversight, which would be covered under Agenda Item 10.

99. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, expressed gratitude to the Chair for his very constructive contribution and for the Secretariat who managed to hold the session. The Group looked at many important issues including the finances of WIPO, as the PBC was able to approve the supplementary capital master plan. The Group hoped to continue constructive dialogue with regard to the mandate of the external offices, which was an item that had had to be postponed. The Group believed that work would be continued in the intersessional period. The Group felt that was a balanced approach to ensure adequate consultation before coming to a decision on the external offices, which were important for WIPO. Moreover, the Group hoped for progress with regard to the language policy and the roadmap on multilingualism. The Group suggested that overcoming linguistic barriers enabled a larger swath of users to have access to the IP system, and to the materials produced by the Organization and the IP system. The Group felt that it was important that using automated systems, such as AI and other digital systems should be integrated into the work of WIPO. New policies were needed, and could be useful in achieving the multilingualism policy. The Group concluded by thanking the ADG for his excellent work over the years.

100. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee. The Group thanked the PBC Chair and the Secretariat for their work prior to and during the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session. The Group noted and understood that the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session was not in a position to discuss and decide on the terms of reference (ToR) for the independent evaluation of the entire network of the WIPO external offices, and the methodology for allocation of income and expenditure by union. The Group stood ready to discuss those issues and looked forward to constructive discussions in the PBC.

101. The Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Sabri Bachtobji (Tunisia), congratulated the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly on his Chairmanship of the meeting and for his wise guidance. He thanked the Director General, Mr. Gurry, and his entire team and the Secretariat, for their excellent efforts to prepare for the Assemblies. He congratulated Mr. Daren Tang, the Director General-Elect who was preparing to take over his task as Director General and wished him success. He recalled that the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session from the September 7 to 11, 2020 was conducted in a hybrid format. The PBC met in fairly satisfactory conditions, thanks to the efforts of all the regional groups, the delegations, as well as the Secretariat. None of them, in fact, spared any effort to make that session a successful one despite the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the exceptional circumstances, he pointed out that the positive results reached were due to having adopted dialogue and consensus amongst all delegations regarding all matters submitted with a view to achieving substantial progress in order to submit recommendations to the Assemblies. He thanked the ADG for his commitment and dedication and wished him the best for his future endeavors. Due to the collective effort, the PBC was able to review the performance of the Organization, financial matters, the annual report on human resources, and other items based on the decisions of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> PBC sessions in 2019. Those items, which included the external offices and the union allocation methodology, were postponed to the forthcoming session of the PBC. He thanked all the delegations and the



Secretariat for a successful session and hoped to rely on them in the future so as to fulfill the tasks and duties at the forthcoming session.

102. The Chair thanked the Chair of the PBC for his statement and commended the readiness that he and other colleagues had shown in involving themselves with the activities and work of the Organization, especially since he had expressed his readiness, shortly after arriving in Geneva, to take over his tasks and duties. The Chair was certain that the Organization would depend on him to a great extent in its future endeavors and years.

103. The Delegation of China thanked the ADG for the presentation of the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session. The Delegation took the opportunity to thank the ADG for his excellent work over the years, as well as his contribution to the improvement of WIPO's governance, and wished him all the best in his future endeavors. Facing the impacts of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO organized the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session in a hybrid mode for the first time. All parties participated constructively in the meeting and the Secretariat had made tremendous efforts. The Delegation appreciated the positive results that were achieved on some issues during the meeting. The Delegation reiterated that data security risks brought by the cloud strategy could have a serious impact on WIPO systems, its users and WIPO as an Organization. This issue deserved utmost attention and the Delegation looked forward to further discussing on this issue with the Secretariat and Member States. On the external office network validation, consultations related to the terms of reference should be open and transparent to ensure an objective and comprehensive evaluation. Therefore, the PBC should take into account Member States' suggestion on that issue together with External Auditor's comments. On the revision of WIPO's language policy, the Delegation believed that, with the rapid expansion of WIPO global IP services in order to adapt to new users' needs and to provide more convenience, it was necessary for the Organization to extend the existing language settings of relevant systems. On the union allocation methodology, the Delegation believed that any decision to change the existing methods must be taken prudently, full studies must be conducted and full impact must be fully considered before any decision. The Delegation believed that unity of the Organization must be ensured and the issue of the union allocation methodology should not cause any division. The Delegation would continue its constructive participation in future discussions on all of the PBC's agenda items.

104. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed its gratitude to the Chair and the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/61/6, which contained the List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee. The Group thanked the Chair of the PBC for his stewardship of the discussions held in the PBC. The Group noted that the PBC 31 met for the first time in a hybrid format and commended the flexibility displayed by Member States, which enabled the successful deliberations in the PBC. The Group welcomed the recommendations from the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session, in particular the Group agreed with the decision to defer some issues, which required extensive negotiations to the following session of the PBC. The Group remained concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the finances and long-term performance of the Organization and requested that the 32<sup>nd</sup> PBC session consider the impact of COVID-19 on the financial health of the Organization. The Group noted the recommended decision on PBC Agenda Item 12, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) membership, and welcomed the invitation for WIPO to become a member of the UNSDG and urged the Organization to expedite the processes for membership. Membership of the UNSDG would complement existing WIPO UN system cooperation. The Group extended its gratitude to the ADG for his work for the Organization and wished him every success in his future endeavors.

105. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea was pleased with the success of the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session, which was held in a hybrid format and which did not experience any technical problems. The Delegation expressed its appreciation to the PBC Chair, Member States and the WIPO Secretariat for their efforts to progress the discussion of agenda items. The Delegation

expressed its sincere thanks to the ADG for his invaluable contribution to WIPO and wished him every success in his endeavors in the future. The Delegation generally agreed with the decisions made by the PBC. With regard to the terms of reference of the 2021 evaluation of WIPO external offices, the Delegation aligned itself with the PBC decision to recommend to the WIPO General Assembly to request the PBC to decide on the terms of reference during its 32<sup>nd</sup> session in 2021. Considering that the terms of reference were very important as a prerequisite for the evaluation, the Delegation was of the view that there should be a draft of the terms of reference before the 32<sup>nd</sup> PBC session. The Delegation believed that the preparation of a draft would help the PBC to expedite its discussion on the terms of reference and carry out the request of the WIPO General Assembly in a more effective and efficient way. The Delegation would take an active part in the discussions in the future.

106. The Delegation of the Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Chair of the PBC for his leadership and appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat regarding the successful organization of the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session in a hybrid format. The Delegation was of the view that the work of the PBC, in particular discussions on WIPO's financial issues, was more relevant than ever due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy. The current global economic crisis could potentially affect WIPO's financial situation. Necessary measures should be undertaken to mitigate its negative impacts on WIPO programs, particularly technical assistance and capacity building projects. The Delegation was pleased that the WIPO Performance Report 2018/19 had been enhanced with redesigned strategic goal dashboards and including, for the first time, an overview of performance by expected results. The Delegation noted with satisfaction the positive financial performance and programmatic performance of the Organization toward achieving the expected result in the 2018/19 biennium. Concerning the UNSDG membership by WIPO, the Delegation highlighted the importance of WIPO's engagement with the UN system and other international organizations for the achievement of the broader UN system objective. On the terms of reference for the evaluation of WIPO external offices, the Delegation recalled the decisions made by the WIPO General Assembly in 2019 and was cognizant of the current restrictions imposed by the pandemic, which prevented the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session from discussing and deciding on the terms of reference. The Delegation was of the conviction that, in the process of drafting the ToR, all relevant documents, including the decision of the WIPO General Assembly and Member States views, should be taken into account. It should be recalled that the decision on opening new external offices is a Member State driven process and this principle should be respected. On the allocation of income and expenditure by unions, the Delegation recalled the constraints which prohibited the PBC from having a very substantive discussion of the matter, and the deferral of the discussion to future PBC sessions. The Delegation maintained that in future discussions on the matter, the fundamental principle of solidarity among the unions and the principle of capacity-to-pay should be respected. The Delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to the ADG for all his commitment and dedication at WIPO and wished him all the best in the future.

107. The Delegation of the Russian Federation supported the statement made on behalf of CACEEC, and thanked the PBC Chair for the effective way in which he had led the session and helped the delegations come to an agreement in a very positive way. The Delegation noted the leadership of WIPO and the external auditor and the results of a healthy financial position and adequate reserves. The Delegation hoped that dialogue would continue on all of the topics under discussion, which had to be postponed until the next session of the PBC. The Delegation particularly hoped that, during the intersessional period, there would be work organized to ensure that there was a balanced mandate with regard to the assessment of work of the external offices, as well as for the revision of the WIPO language policy and the roadmap for multilingualism. The multilingual policy needed to be updated, particularly with regard to the use of innovative technology. Additional time for bringing in necessary amendments could be used to familiarize the delegations, and to take into account in the new report the recommendations of the JIU on multilingualism within the UN system. Language equality is one of the key values of the UN system, allowing free access to information and stimulating growth

of the international registration system. The Delegation was ready to work actively and to participate in the future work of the PBC.

108. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned:

- (i) took note of the "List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee" (document A/61/6); and
- (ii) approved the recommendations made by the Program and Budget Committee as contained in the same document.

#### ITEM 12 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### WIPO ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTER, INCLUDING DOMAIN NAMES

109. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document WO/GA/53/9).

#### ITEM 13 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### MADRID SYSTEM

110. See the report of the session of the Madrid Union Assembly (document MM/A/54/2).

#### ITEM 14 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### HAGUE SYSTEM

111. See the report of the session of the Hague Union Assembly (document H/A/40/2).

#### ITEM 15 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### PARIS UNION ASSEMBLY

112. See the report of the session of the Paris Union Assembly (document P/A/56/2).

#### ITEM 16 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### MARRAKESH TREATY TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO PUBLISHED WORKS FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND, VISUALLY IMPAIRED OR OTHERWISE PRINT DISABLED (MVT)

113. See the report of the session of the Marrakesh Treaty Assembly (document MVT/A/5/2).

#### ITEM 17 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

##### BEIJING TREATY ON AUDIOVISUAL PERFORMANCES (BTAP)

114. See the report of the session of the Beijing Treaty Assembly (document BTAP/A/1/3).

## ITEM 18 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### REPORTS ON STAFF MATTERS

115. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document WO/CC/78/5).

## ITEM 19 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### DESIGNATION OF THE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE WIPO APPEAL BOARD (WAB)

116. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document WO/CC/78/5).

## ITEM 20 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### EXCEPTIONAL RE-APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY DIRECTORS GENERAL AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS GENERAL

117. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document WO/CC/78/5).

## ITEM 21 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

118. Discussions were based on document A/61/9.

119. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned,

(i) adopted the Summary Report (document A/61/9); and

(ii) requested the Secretariat to finalize the Extensive Reports, post them on the WIPO website and communicate them to Member States by October 24, 2020. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat by November 24, 2020, after which the final reports will be deemed adopted by December 15, 2020.

## ITEM 22 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### CLOSING OF THE SESSIONS

120. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, extended its thanks to the Chairs for their dedicated guidance throughout the Assemblies and for facilitating the discussions. Group B extended its appreciation to the Secretariat for its support in the lead-up to and during the session. Group B stated that it would be remiss not to extend its thanks to the WIPO conference service staff, the skilled interpreters and the WIPO IT support staff without whom these Assemblies would not have been possible. Group B also thanked all Member States for their tireless efforts throughout the week. As stated in its opening statement, Group B welcomed that WIPO, a house of innovation and creativity, has been able to resume its intergovernmental work. The Group noted that the sixty-first series of meetings this week

proved that working effectively in a hybrid format was possible, and led to consensual decisions both on government, oversight and substance. It particularly noted the fact that the membership was able to come together and agree on several changes to the international IP registration systems as a proof of the ability of Member States to enact sound measures essential in the times of crisis and beneficial in the long-run. Furthermore, the Group welcomed and applauded the Secretariat, delegations and officers for making the hybrid format truly functional. These included a couple of welcome firsts. Most notably, the successful presiding over sessions by Chairs connected remotely. Group B considered it a good practice that decision language be projected on the screen to ensure that all delegations in the room and those connected remotely could follow the decision-making. This was especially important if proposed decision language was being revised. Practice makes perfect and the more delegations come together physically and virtually the less abnormal it will become. The Group called on all Member States to work together to optimize hybrid meetings for the sake of the Organization and the Member States' role. Group B looked forward to seeing work being conducted in an inclusive and pragmatic manner in the Working Groups and Committees scheduled over the autumn and beyond. Group B could see that the Extraordinary General Assembly to be convened by the Director General in the first half of 2021 was an opportunity to deal flexibly with the substantive issues that delegations were not able to tackle during the week, due to the postponement of the Working Groups and the Committees in 2020, and to provide a direction of travel to the Organization. Finally, the Group genuinely thanked those who were participating in their last WIPO meeting, in their current positions, in particular, the Director General.

121. The Delegation of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group, thanked the Chair and his Vice-Chairs for all their efforts in the General Assembly. The CEBS Group was pleased that the General Assembly was made possible during these extraordinary circumstances of the ongoing global pandemic. The Group reiterated its thanks to the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents and meetings, and the interpreters for their hard work and excellent performance. The Group also thanked all the delegations participating in the General Assembly both on site and virtually, and for their constructive contributions to the deliberations.

122. The Delegation of China noted that, with the joint efforts of all parties and for the first time in history, the General Assembly was convened successfully in a physical and online hybrid mode, completing all the agenda items and reaching the expected results. The Delegation extended its appreciation and gratitude to the Director General and the Secretariat for their hard work in guaranteeing the smooth running of the meetings. The Delegation also extended its appreciation and thanks to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Assemblies, for their excellent work. The Delegation noted that this WIPO General Assembly session and the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC session held recently have gained valuable experience for WIPO Committees and Working Group meetings to be held this year in a similar hybrid mode. The Delegation commended the joint efforts of the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly, the Secretariat and the Chairs who presided the relevant Assemblies meetings remotely. The Delegation noted that it was a useful attempt worth continuing and improving. The Delegation was confident that with joint efforts, delegations shall overcome the negative impact of the pandemic and push forward consultations on various agenda items and relevant norm setting work. The Delegation stated that the UN convened a summit commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its creation on September 21. The President of China, Xi Jinping, stated in his speech to the Summit "Major changes unseen in a century are taking place in our world. The sudden attack of COVID-19 is a grave test for the entire world. Mankind has entered a new era of interconnectedness with the countries sharing intertwined interests and their future closely linked together. Global threats and global challenges require strong global response." The Delegation believed that in the process of responding to the threats and the challenges of COVID-19, WIPO as a UN specialized agency in charge of IP affairs, has and shall continue to play an important role in promoting international cooperation in the IP area. WIPO will use its expertise in the IP field to

coordinate the efforts of Member States to combat the pandemic with solidarity. The Delegation appreciated the cooperative spirit and the flexibility demonstrated at this conference. The Delegation looked forward to all parties keeping the momentum for consultations on agenda items in the future, thus enhancing the important role of WIPO in the discussion of those items relating to risk bounding to global threats and challenges. The Delegation reiterated its thanks and best wishes for the future to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, and the Assistant Director General, Mr. Ambi Sundaram, for their outstanding contributions in WIPO's development. The Delegation thanked the translators and interpreters for the high quality of the translation and interpretation they provided for the Assemblies, which ensured the smooth running of the meeting. In closing, the Delegation wished good health and safety to colleagues based in Geneva and in capitals.

123. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed its appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs, Director General, Francis Gurry and the Secretariat for a most harmonious, productive and efficient Assemblies in WIPO's history. The Group noted that it was the first Assemblies to have been conducted through hybrid means and congratulated the Organization and Member States for having come together in common purpose to carry the work of the Organization forward. In spite of the significant challenges that COVID-19 had imposed on the operations of the Organization and the ability of Member States to carry out substantive negotiations, the Group sternly believed that the flexibility and good faith displayed in these Assemblies was a true example of multilateral diplomacy. The Group also believed that this flexibility, if taken forward in other discussions in the Organization, may just be the solution to the many longstanding norm setting agenda. The Group commended the Assemblies for agreeing to convene an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first half of 2021 to deliberate on substantive discussions. This had been necessitated by the disruption to norm setting work. However, the Group was of the view that, due to the ongoing uncertainty, the convocation needs to be proceeded by consultations with Member States on the format of the agenda of the extraordinary session, to ensure that deliberations are inclusive, transparent and effective. On audit and oversight, the Group commended the Secretariat for having obtained an unqualified audit report for 2019. The Group also commended the open and transparent dissemination of information and appreciated the Secretariat's commitment to adhere to best practices in financial management. The Group noted the recommendations contained in the Report by the External Auditor, in particular the recommendations on external offices, an important reference point in the evaluation of external offices. However, the Group cautioned Member States to be mindful of the development dimension in the evaluation of external offices. The Group stated that the amendments to the Hague and Madrid Systems to make email a required indication were welcome and beneficial. The same could be said for the Paris Convention's non-binding guidance note on the right of priority in emergencies. The Group witnessed the inaugural session of the Beijing Treaty Assembly and the update on the current number of Member States that had acceded to the Treaty. The Group urged more members to accede to the Treaty and commended the Secretariat for the awareness raising initiatives and assistance in the legislative alignment. In addition, the Group urged Member States to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty. The Group appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat in inculcating gender parity and increased geographical representation in the workforce of WIPO. It encouraged the Secretariat to increase those initiatives to achieve a more inclusive and multicultural workforce which would reflect the membership of the Organization. In realizing the challenges that COVID-19 had caused, the Group noted that, in the selection of a new SMT, Member States agreed to a temporary exceptional reappointment of the current SMT for a three-month period to enable a seamless transition. The Group hoped that this intervention shall afford the Director General-Elect enough opportunity to nominate individuals based on experience, merit and being mindful of the principles of geographical representation and gender parity. In closing, the Group noted that these Assemblies marked the end of an era for the Organization led by Director General Francis Gurry, who had acquitted himself to many years of service to the Organization. The Group wished him well in his future endeavors and stated that he shall forever be remembered for his enduring and lasting legacy

as a champion in IP. Finally, the Group noted that these Assemblies also marked the beginning of a new era under the Director General-Elect, Daren Tang, and the Group looked forward to working with him in carrying out the work of the Organization into a development-oriented future.

124. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, thanked everyone who had contributed to this very efficient and effective sixty-first series of meetings, in particular the Chair for his leadership and determination in steering the Assemblies and delivering some meaningful outcomes, including the recognition of the good work achieved by the Marrakesh Treaty and the Beijing Treaty. Both treaties were a reminder of the positive impact that delegations could bring to society if everyone worked together. The Group extended its appreciation to the Secretariat, the conference team, IT staff and the interpreters, for their excellent work in supporting the Assemblies. The Group reiterated its warmest appreciation to Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General. Last but not the least, the Group joined all delegations in sincerely thanking the Director General Francis Gurry, for his dedication to, and advancement of, WIPO. The Report of the Director General to the 2020 WIPO Assemblies, aptly entitled *Retrospective 2020*, reflects the profound impact he had had on the Organization. The Group wished him the very best in his future endeavors. In closing, the Group looked forward to the continued engagement with all Member States in their collective efforts to move the Organization forward.

125. The Delegation of Panama, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Chair for his leadership and his efforts in conducting the work of these Assemblies, as well as the Secretariat for their preparatory work and their efforts during these series of meetings. GRULAC said that, in spite of the new technological tools that had facilitated the participation of delegations at the meeting, Member States had also noted the major challenges that made it very difficult for delegations to reengage work completely. GRULAC attaches considerable importance to the work of WIPO in all its aspects, and reiterated the need for WIPO to continue and redouble its efforts in encouraging the use of IP as a tool for innovation and development. GRULAC noted the importance of strengthening the cross-cutting approach of the Development Agenda and its 45 recommendations in all of the initiatives and Committees of the Organization. There was the need to have this as an active and dynamic agenda, particularly focusing on cooperation and capacity building. GRULAC was pleased that an agreement had been reached on the possible convening of an Extraordinary General Assembly in 2021, whether or not the health conditions would permit meetings to take place physically, as well as all the various arrangements that need to be agreed upon by Member States. GRULAC welcomed the three-month extension of the SMT to the end of 2020, which will assist the Director General-Elect in the transition until a new SMT takes office at a later stage, noting that this would allow the Director General-Elect enough time to submit a list of the right candidates to the WIPO Coordination Committee. Turning to the HR report, GRULAC welcomed the tangible progress made but wished to reiterate the Organization's debt to its region in terms of the lack of geographical distribution within the staff of the Organization. GRULAC therefore requested that the recruitment policy of WIPO manages to overcome this problem effectively in the future. GRULAC thanked the interpreters and the conference services for their priceless support. GRULAC requested the Organization to provide solutions to their members to enable them to obtain interpretation services virtually not only in the Committees and these Assemblies, but also in the coordination meetings with the various regional groups. GRULAC concluded by thanking Director General Francis Gurry for his stewardship and efforts in the helm of the Organization, as well as for the progress and the results achieved in the normative agenda during his period of office. GRULAC also thanked the current SMT for its efforts, and wished them every success in their new endeavors.

126. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, thanked the organizers of these series of meetings of the Assemblies. The CACEEC stated that in a very short period of time, delegations have been able to discuss issues and reached mutual understanding in their positions. In resolving some of the most sensitive issues, delegations

observed that the skillful diplomacy of the Chair had played a key role, and the Group believed that it had been very important to achieving balanced decisions. The CACEEC thanked the regional coordinators who had done an enormous amount of work, as well as the Director General and his team who had been very actively involved. The CACEEC noted that a number of key issues were discussed such as the adoption of the Paris Union complimentary document, the fundamental requirements relating to the Madrid and Hague Systems, the Extraordinary Session of the WIPO General Assembly to be held in the first half of next year, as well as the Extraordinary Session of the WIPO Coordination Committee scheduled for this year. The CACEEC noted that, because the Beijing Treaty had entered into force, there was a need to make changes to the way of work, which had been done very successfully. The CACEEC noted that cooperation had prevailed and that delegations had been able to work on the documents in a very constructive spirit. The CACEEC expressed its gratitude to all the Member States for the constructive dialogue that had prevailed throughout the discussions. The CACEEC noted that the meetings were held in different conditions than usual, which meant that the Secretariat had to do more work than usual by adapting promptly and at a very high level of quality to the new conditions. The CACEEC said that there was no doubt that these hybrid meetings cannot replace the traditional face-to-face meetings, particularly regarding consultations on sensitive agenda items. However, the CACEEC was very grateful to those who had made it possible for delegations to achieve results this week. The CACEEC also thanked the translators and the interpreters. The CACEEC highlighted that, by working together, Member States had managed to achieve something quite significant despite the challenges in this very difficult period. The CACEEC thanked the Director General for all that he had done, not only this week but over several years. He has really made WIPO the heart of innovation, the introduction of new technologies and a real home for Geneva delegations. The CACEEC reiterated its congratulations to Mr. Tang on his election, and wished him every success in his transition to the new period, and looked forward to working with him in future. The CACEEC reassured him that it would continue to participate in the collective efforts to promote the work of the Organization.

127. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member states, thanked the Chair for his efforts and guidance throughout the week that had led to successful Assemblies, the first in a hybrid format. The Delegation also thanked the Secretariat, whose hard work and excellent performance during the week was indispensable for the smooth and effective running of these Assemblies. The Delegation noted that the successful conduct of these Assemblies simply showed WIPO's great ability to adapt to these special circumstances, and its ability to act and to show the right direction for the future work of the Organization. The Delegation reiterated its continued commitment to WIPO's work, and WIPO could count on the active support of the European Union and its member states.

128. The Delegation of Jamaica thanked the Chair for his excellent conduct of the meeting. The Delegate said that, although it was five in the morning in Jamaica, she had been following the meetings since three a.m., which makes it quite difficult for their Delegation. However, the Delegation thanked the Chair for guiding the Member States throughout the meeting in this revised format. The Delegation also extended its thanks especially to the interpreters noting that the interpretation had been fantastic. The Delegation aligned itself to the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation recognized the challenges of delegations on this side of the world who had to be awake early to be able to participate in the discussions. The Delegation placed on record the excellent relationship it had enjoyed with Mr. Ambi Sundaram, and also recognized and thanked Director General, Francis Gurry for the untiring support that he had showed, not only towards Jamaica, but towards the Caribbean region. The Delegation acknowledged that Dr. Gurry and WIPO were friends of the region, and the Delegation thanked him immensely and wished him all the best in his new endeavors. The Delegation looked forward to working with Director General-Elect Daren Tang. As delegations tried to navigate and work to find an effective way to work and have discussions and negotiations, the Delegation believed that going forward would be a challenge because it would



like to participate but the pandemic was a challenge for it to deal with the substantive work of the Organization. The Delegation participated in the PBC and it was a challenge for the Delegation to contribute substantively. The Delegation hoped and knows that WIPO is the center of all innovation, therefore the Delegation was looking forward to WIPO expanding an innovative way for the Delegation to work to meet the Organization and to continue to contribute to the development of especially small island States.

129. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Jamaica for following the works of these Assemblies in the early hours and for its statement. The Chair said that the delegation's statement as well as the other statements was a testimony of the very high professional way the Assemblies had been organized, particularly by the Secretariat, and also the testimony of the importance of the Organization.

130. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Chair for his guidance and leadership in the course of the week. The Delegation appreciated the constructive engagement of all regional groups and individual Member States, which made these very exceptional Assemblies were a success. The Delegation stated that it was the last Assemblies that delegations had been privileged to work with Dr. Gurry as the WIPO Director General. The Delegation, speaking on behalf of its Ambassador, His Excellency Esmaeil Baghaei Hamaneh and all IP authorities in Tehran, extended its sincere gratitude and thanks to Mr. Gurry, for all his commitments and dedication in the course of his tenure. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Gurry for all his achievements and wished him the best of success in his future endeavors. The Delegation invited delegations to stand and give Mr. Gurry a round of applause. *[Delegations stood and gave Mr. Gurry a round of applause]*. The Delegation welcomed the new Director General and looked forward to working with him in a collective effort to fulfill WIPO's global mandate. The Delegation affirmed that, in the relentless pursuit of dialogue and multilateralism, Iran (Islamic Republic of) will always be a steadfast partner.

131. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea appreciated the Chair's skillful leadership in conducting the meeting successfully. The Delegation stated that, with the development of the society and economy, the role of WIPO was getting more important and noted that WIPO has been contributing to the development of the world economy in line with WIPO's mandate. The Delegation stated that the success of WIPO was due to the dedication, commitment and skillful leadership of Dr. Francis Gurry, the outgoing Director General. The Delegation joined all Member States in thanking and appreciating Dr. Gurry for his lifelong dedication to WIPO. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Daren Tang, the Director General-Elect. The Delegation wished Dr. Gurry the very best.

132. The Delegation of Nigeria thanked the Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) for allowing delegations to give Dr. Francis Gurry a standing ovation. Although participating remotely, the Delegation had joined the well-deserved standing ovation. The Delegation commended the Chair for the excellent manner in which he had conducted and guided the work of the Assemblies to a successful conclusion in an exemplary manner. The Delegation appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the Secretariat to ensure the smooth running of the Assemblies. The Delegation paid special tribute to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his 12 years of excellency at the helm of WIPO. The Delegation wished Mr. Daren Tang, Director General-Elect, a successful tenure. In that regard, Mr. Tang could count on Nigeria's full support. The Delegation also extended its appreciation to Mr. Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General, for his 12 years of dedicated service to WIPO, and wished him the best in his future endeavors. The Delegation aligned itself with the statement delivered by Zimbabwe, on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation noted that this year's Assemblies were held during one of the most challenging times in human history, which made delegations reflect on the challenge of achieving coherence, consensus and effectiveness in the important work of WIPO. Nonetheless, delegations had all worked together to ensure the business continuity of the Organization during these exceptional times, while achieving the objectives set out by the

Assemblies. The Delegation observed that the measures taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the Organization and safeguard public health had been exemplary, especially in the way WIPO had continued to innovate and provide essential services to facilitate the mission of delegations to address the challenges of those in the most vulnerable contexts. The Delegation saluted every participant present at the Assemblies and those who joined remotely. The Delegation extended its special thanks to the interpreters, the accreditation unit and those who had worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure the success of the Assemblies. With a continued commitment by all members and the consistent support of the WIPO Secretariat, who continued to succeed in translating the shared vision for an enhanced WIPO, the Delegation will continue to participate actively in WIPO. The Delegation reaffirmed its commitment to work with all Member States to strengthen the Organization for the benefit of all stakeholders.

133. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea reiterated its thanks to the Chair and the Member States who had shown strong leadership and a constructive spirit. In addition, the Delegation thanked the Secretariat, especially the conference service team and interpreters, for their excellent work in supporting the Assemblies. Furthermore, the Delegation extended its heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Francis Gurry, for his invaluable contributions during his term. The Delegation noted that under his leadership WIPO had performed in an efficient and effective manner and produced many stellar results. The Delegation wished him the best in his future endeavors. The Delegation looked forward to continuing this constructive spirit and discussions, and wished delegations good health.

134. The Delegation of Canada aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Delegation noted that, after 35 years of service to the Organization, the Director General had only a week to his term and that it felt a bit real or surreal. The Delegation congratulated the Director General for his work in making WIPO what it is today and for the support he had provided to Canada as it furthers its IP regime and consolidates its active role in the IP world. The Delegation also congratulated Mr. Sundaram for his dedicated service and availability. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Tang on his appointment and looked forward to working with him to continue to foster the Organization and to take WIPO even further ahead. Furthermore, the Delegation congratulated everyone in the Administration and the Management Sector, and in the Assemblies Affairs and Documentation Division, for their superb work in adapting the Assemblies to this hybrid format. The Delegation looked forward to pragmatic, sensible and incremental resumption of normative work, and believed that delegations needed to find middle ground and practical means between not meeting at all and holding negotiation meetings. The Delegation realized that it was not equally easy for everyone. Although the Delegation had its own challenges, it believed that it was important to find a practical and mutually agreeable middle ground. With regard to certain aspects of the registration systems and the global IP infrastructure, the Delegation said that users depended on the decisions and stewardship of Member States to ensure the continued development of the systems. The Delegation reminded that the WIPO committees provide a unique opportunity for stakeholders, and particularly in the case of the IGC for indigenous people and local communities, to make their voices heard. The Delegation applauded WIPO's resilience as regards the registration systems as witnessed this year. The Delegation noted that WIPO was very much the crossroads of multilateralism in IT but was also the world's IP office, and that continued development and predictability of the registration systems were certainly crucial from an administrative perspective.

135. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic extended its sincere congratulations to the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang. The Delegate stated that it had recently taken over directorship of the National Copyright Office (ONDA), with a firm determination to continue to contribute to the pooled efforts of members of the Organization, to promote tangible and effective policies on copyright and related rights, and in particular to join efforts with other offices in its region to achieve common goals. The Delegation said that COVID-19 had had a

substantial impact on daily life and had rocked the global economy. The Delegation noted that artists, authors and creators had found it difficult and had had to cancel concerts; the cultural economy had been struck by cancellations of several events and there had been millions of losses. The Delegation stated that creative and cultural industries would continue to be an engine of economic growth in all countries and that was the reason why many governments had taken measures to protect entrepreneurship to try to limit the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment and on economic losses of companies, as well as taken initiatives to design new public policies. The Delegation was determined to pull its efforts to improve regional international cooperation, to promote and protect IP copyright and related rights. It was the priority of the Dominican Republic to ensure that copyright is respected, and that protected works generate income and contribute to its GDP while becoming a productive industry. The Delegation believed its Government had to pay specific attention to the Beijing Treaty. The Delegation was in the process of guaranteeing the achievement of that Treaty. The Delegation stated that ONDA must ensure that audiovisual rights are protected at the international level to implement the Treaty successfully. It therefore appreciated the initiatives in that respect. The Delegation needed to consider whether there was the need to examine how to incorporate specific tangible measures that guarantee respect for copyright. In respect of the rights of audiovisual performances in the area of digital development, the Delegation believed in the promotion of the sustainability of the creative and audiovisual economies because they had such an important contribution to the well-being of the society. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its constant support and collaboration with ONDA as it takes the role of its office further. The Delegation affirmed its readiness to continue implementing copyright and related rights initiatives in the Dominican Republic.

136. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking in its national capacity, aligned itself with the statement of the African Group. The Delegation expressed its appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs, the Secretariat, the translators and all the conference and administrative divisions for facilitating a successful Assemblies. The Delegation commended Member States for concluding several matters without which the Organization would not be able to carry its essential work. The Delegation appreciated the development oriented technical assistance it had received from WIPO during the tenure of Dr. Francis Gurry, under the auspices of the African Bureau and other divisions. The Delegation invited Mr. Gurry to visit Zimbabwe anytime, if ever he wished to spend his retirement days in the wonderful Victoria Falls. The Delegation also extended its gratitude to Mr. Ambi Sundaram for his 12 years of service to the Organization, and wished him well in his future endeavors. The Delegation also welcomed Director General-Elect Daren Tang and looked forward to working with him, as well as working with other Member States in ensuring the success of the Organization.

137. The Delegation of Chile paid tribute to the Chair and aligned itself with the statement of the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for making this meeting possible, even in the context of the pandemic, and in particular the team of interpreters who made communication possible. The Delegation thanked the outgoing Director General Francis Gurry for all his support to its country and for his services to multilateralism. The success of his management was witnessed in every area of work of the Organization.

138. The Chief of Staff, Mr. Naresh Prasad, speaking on behalf of the staff of WIPO, placed on record the Organization's deepest sense of appreciation to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, who has been at the helm of WIPO for the past 12 years. The Chief of Staff said that Mr. Gurry turned the Organization into a modern, efficient, responsive but, above all, an inclusive Organization. The Chief of Staff stated that Mr. Gurry, through his untiring efforts and single-minded devotion, succeeded in opening up the Organization to all its Member States and its multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, Mr. Gurry had overseen the implementation of a flurry of programs and projects, which have been of interest to each and every stakeholder of WIPO. The Chief of Staff believed that this would be Mr. Gurry's lasting legacy and the Organization thanked him for that. The Chief of Staff, speaking in his personal capacity,

thanked the Director General for the trust and confidence that he had reposed in him, and for having given him the opportunity to serve as the Secretary of the Assemblies and other Governing Bodies of WIPO. The Chief of Staff said that during the past 12 years, in that capacity, he had had the rare opportunity to serve as Secretary of the Assemblies for over 250 governing bodies. It had been, to say the least, an enriching as well as a very humbling experience, and it would not have been possible without the constant support and guidance that he received from Mr. Gurry. The Chief of Staff reiterated his thanks to Mr. Gurry. The Chief of Staff, on behalf of his colleagues in WIPO, took the opportunity to wish Mr. Gurry all the best in his future endeavors. The Chief of Staff was sure that without the trappings of the position of Director General, Mr. Gurry would continue to contribute to a free world full of opportunities, waiting to make use of his skills and experience. In conclusion, the Chief of Staff said that it would be remiss not to thank all his colleagues, too many to name individually, for making the Assemblies a successful one, despite very challenging circumstances.

139. The Delegation of Indonesia aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation thanked the Chair and the Vice-Chairs for their excellent conduct of the General Assembly under the special circumstances. The Asia and the Pacific Group congratulated and thanked Member States, the Secretariat, the interpreters and all for their excellent contributions to the smooth convening of the meeting that enabled delegations to attain positive decisions on all agenda items. The Delegation congratulated the Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry on his excellent leadership in guiding the Organization, and reiterated its appreciation to Dr. Gurry's service and contributions to WIPO in the past 35 years, which included 12 years of service as the Director General. The Delegation did not wish to repeat what the Chief of Staff had eloquently stated on the achievement and legacies of Dr. Gurry. The Delegation wished Dr. Gurry all the best for his future endeavors. The Delegation reiterated its congratulations to Daren Tang on his appointment as the Director General of WIPO. The Delegation affirmed its commitment to continue to support the mission of the Organization for a balanced international IP system under the excellent leadership of Director General Daren Tang. The Delegation recognized the challenges posed by the pandemic and hoped that normative work would soon continue. The Delegation was convinced that delegations would re-emerge stronger and more united, and would be able to have face-to-face meetings once again.

140. The Director General thanked delegations for their extremely generous words and indulgence, over the course of the last 12 years, as well as for their capacity to forgive. The Director General reiterated that it had been a journey of opening. It is a privilege to be able to serve in an international organization in any capacity and, certainly, to serve as a Director General was a great privilege because it was an opportunity for opening to the diversity of the world. In particular, with the experience and the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Director General believed that delegations had a shared destiny and that one of the roles of an international organization was to unite delegations around the shared destiny and consider how to confront it together in the best possible manner. The Director General therefore deeply appreciated the opportunity delegations had given him, which was a privilege. With regard to the meeting, the Director General thanked all delegations for their patience, perseverance and indulgence. The Director General believed that the meeting was successful given the circumstances, and thanks to the contributions of delegations, in particular the group coordinators who bore a particular heavy burden under the circumstances of the meeting. For the past six months, cognizant that the meeting would take place in special circumstances, they had been extremely attentive and highly consultative with the Organization and all the Member States. The Director General acknowledged that it was in large part thanks to the leadership, guidance and wisdom of the Chair that the meeting had functioned smoothly. The Director General reiterated his thanks to the Chair. The Director General thanked the Chief of Staff, Secretary of the Assemblies, for his extraordinary work. The Director General said that it was not easy to organize the Assemblies because WIPO was a complicated Organization with various unions and a complex architecture. However, the Chief of Staff had once again

delivered in an outstanding manner. The Director General thanked the Chief of Staff and all his colleagues, in particular, the Assemblies Affairs and Documentation Division, and the several colleagues who had contributed. The Director General also thanked the outstanding performance of the conference services, the Legal Counsel and his Office, the support services, the interpreters who were mentioned with deep gratitude by a number of delegations, the cleaning staff who did an extraordinary job in making sure that delegations could meet in hygienic circumstances, the security services colleagues and the many colleagues who contributed. The Director General stated that this was an example of a collaborative effort and a good example of why collective action, and eventually multilateralism, provides the best results because everyone was able to contribute. In conclusion, the Director General expressed his deepest gratitude and thanks to all delegations for the privilege and the opportunity they had given him. The Director General wished his successor, Daren Tang, every success, in which he believed would be an outstanding mandate.

141. The Chair reiterated the capacity of Member States to achieve the best possible results thanks to their determination flexibility and willingness to move forward the work of the Organization, which was an example of multilateralism. The Chair congratulated delegations because the Assemblies took place as scheduled in the best possible conditions and facilitated participation. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for the excellent organization and for ensuring the health and safety of all, which remained his and the Secretariat's priority. The Chair noted that the hybrid format meeting was a test for all delegations and a challenge for the Organization, testing its capacity to move the work forward. Furthermore, the Chair stated that it was a test for logistical and technical capacities, in which the Organization had invested strongly. The Chair believed that it was an opportunity for all delegations to witness the handover of the post of the Director General of the Organization, and an opportunity for delegations to express their appreciation for the immense contribution of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Gurry. The Chair acknowledged the Director General's great efforts during his two terms of office and said that it had been an opportunity to pay tribute to him. The Chair congratulated the incoming Director General. The Chair stated that the successful and excellent participation in the meeting reflected the importance that Member States attached to the Organization and all its topics such as culture, economy, and creativity. The Chair stated that, as he continues his term as the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly and engagement in meetings, he would intensify consultations over the next coming months to prepare the next Assemblies, one Extraordinary Assembly and other Ordinary Assemblies in 2021, in accordance with a clear roadmap reflecting all the expectations of Member States. In concluding, the Chair extended his sincere thanks to all Member States, observers, regional coordinators and the Vice-Chairs, for their excellent cooperation and contribution. The Chair also thanked the Secretariat, including all of the support staff, for their excellent preparation and conduct prior and during these Assemblies, and for issuing documentation on time. In addition, the Chair thanked the Chief of Staff for his excellent work as Secretary of the Assemblies, the Legal Counsel for his support, and all the WIPO staff who had shown great professionalism. The Chair had been honored to work with all of them during these series of meetings. The Chair also said that it would be remiss not to thank the excellent team of interpreters, without whom communication would have been impossible. The Chair apologized to the interpreters for changing languages from time to time. However, he believed that changing languages was a good reflection of multilingualism that delegations defended. The Chair wished delegations a safe trip back home. Given the exceptional circumstances whereby there were remote participants as well, the Chair hoped the remote participants would get the opportunity to participate face-to-face next time, to enable them to contribute fruitfully to discussions on important issues. The Chair concluded by wishing every success to the new Director General and to all of WIPO Staff under his stewardship. The Chair looked forward to the next meeting and wished all a good weekend. The Chair, on behalf of all Member States, reiterated thanks to the Director General for his work of more than three decades, his term as Director General for 12 years, and wished him every success in his future endeavors and a long and healthy life.

142. The Sixty-First Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO was closed by the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly on September 24, 2020.

[Annex follows]

## ITEM 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

### GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. The Delegations and Representatives of the following 112 States, three intergovernmental organizations and 12 non-governmental organizations provided oral or written statements under this agenda item: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (the), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe, African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), Patent Office of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), Inter-American Association of Industrial Property (ASIPI), Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN), Center for International Intellectual Property Studies (CEIPI), *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)*, Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA), Health and Environment Program (HEP), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO), International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC), Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) and Knowledge Ecology International (KEI).
2. Delegations and Representatives congratulated the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly on his election to office. They expressed appreciation for the leadership of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, and congratulated the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, on his appointment. Delegations and Representatives also thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of documents and meetings during these challenging times.
3. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, commended the progress in intellectual property (IP) development activities in recent years. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had presented both challenges and opportunities for the global IP regime and had demonstrated the need for an integral IP approach in solving health emergencies. WIPO leadership should, when adapting to the current challenges, streamline the Development Agenda (DA) recommendations in all its programs and activities. The Group perceived that the current session of the Assemblies had a truncated agenda and accordingly agreed with the proposal to convene an extraordinary session of the Assemblies in the first half of 2021 to deliberate on substantive discussions. However, due to the ongoing uncertainty, the convocation should be preceded by consultations with Member States on the format and agenda of that extraordinary session to ensure inclusive and transparent deliberations. The Group appreciated the various audit and oversight reports. It welcomed the recommendations from the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC); it particularly agreed with the decisions to defer some issues requiring extensive negotiations to the next PBC session. The possible consequence of COVID-19 on WIPO's finances and long-term performance was a concern. The proposed amendments to the Hague and Madrid Systems, through the COVID-19 measures of making e-mail a required indication, would be welcome and beneficial.

Likewise for the Paris Convention nonbinding guidelines note on the right of priority in emergencies. Similar measures should be extended to those filing in opposition. The Group reaffirmed its determination to participate actively towards the success of future deliberations.

4. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, called for all WIPO governing committees to have a more equitable geographical representation, in particular the Coordination Committee and the PBC. Membership of those Committees should reflect the size and contributions of the Group, which was the second largest regional group and one of the largest sources of the growth in IP filings. The 2020 Global Innovation Index (GII) had highlighted the significant progress made in innovation by the Group's members, who had represented the majority of new accessions to the Paris Union and the Berne Union since 2011. In 2020, one of the Group's members had become the 30<sup>th</sup> party to deposit its instrument of ratification for the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances (the Beijing Treaty), which had enabled that Treaty to enter into force. It was thus important for the Group to be well represented on all WIPO Committees. Secondly, the Group encouraged WIPO Member States and the Secretariat to continue to strengthen the development focus of WIPO, including through the implementation of the DA. Development remained one of the Group's core interests and it was committed to building a fair and balanced IP system that would spur development and economic growth. In light of the current situation, a discussion on IP and health would also be timely and relevant. Thirdly, the Group welcomed the financial review of the Organization and thanked the various audit and oversight committees for their efforts to provide independent and effective internal oversight of WIPO. The Organization's stable financial situation would enable it to weather the uncertainties that lay ahead. Lastly, the Group expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for ensuring that the Assemblies could be conducted in a manner that protected the health and safety of all participants. The Group was committed to further deepening and broadening its excellent relationship with the Secretariat, and would contribute constructively and actively to the Assemblies.

5. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of the Group of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC), welcomed both those participants of the Assemblies who were present in the conference hall physically and those who were connected to it remotely, noting that the Assemblies were taking place in a new format this fall. The Group expressed its gratitude to the International Bureau of WIPO for organizing the current session despite the complexities of the prevailing epidemiological situation. It also expressed its deep gratitude to Mr. Francis Gurry for his skillful management of the Organization. Over the years Mr. Gurry had spent at the helm of WIPO, the global system of IP had come a long way. His deep knowledge and professionalism, as well as his dedication to finding balanced and meaningful solutions, had played a major role in determining the direction of the Organization's development. The Group took the opportunity to thank Mr. Gurry for his important contribution to the growth of the body of treaties underlying the cooperation mechanisms, the evolution of international registration systems and the diversification of the range of services provided by WIPO. The stable financial situation of the Organization had resulted from active outreach efforts geared, among other things, towards universities and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as its caring attitude to users. The creative community continued to create demand for WIPO services even when the situation in the markets was turbulent. The Group expressed its hope that the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, would continue efforts to foster the development of WIPO as the leading forum for inclusive and transparent international dialogue and multilateral cooperation between partners, and promote the development of a positive and unifying agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the global nature of modern challenges, calling for a coordinated reaction and concerted efforts on the part of the entire global community. The Group was convinced of the decisive role of multilateral cooperation in the field of IP, which would also promote sustainable development. It congratulated Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment to his important position, assuring him of its readiness to support and actively cooperate with him on the entire agenda. The Group was pleased to note that, during lockdown, WIPO had continued its work remotely,



and the productivity of examiners had gone up, which was testament to the importance of further efforts towards the digital transformation of the Organization. The Group was also pleased to note the leadership of WIPO in discussing the uses of new technologies. It welcomed the information indicating the stable condition of international registration systems. In the opinion of the Group, WIPO had every chance of successfully overcoming the current uncertainty in the markets. In 2020, owing to the unique format of the meetings, the agenda of the Assemblies had been significantly reduced. The Group was taking a constructive and flexible approach towards the proposals of other States regarding the agendas for meetings of the Governing Bodies. In that context, it hoped for the speedy adoption of the decisions on which a consensus had already been reached, as well as for fruitful deliberations during the meetings of the main WIPO committees and working groups scheduled to take part in a hybrid format until the end of the year. In particular, the Group was interested in a swift solution to the matter of recommending the appointment of the Eurasian Patent Office as an International Searching Authority and an International Preliminary Examining Authority. It was convinced that such a decision would contribute to an expanded use of the international patent system and the development of innovation in Eurasia. The Group was of the view that the configuration of the WIPO Senior Management Team (SMT) was of the utmost importance. It hoped that, during its extraordinary session scheduled to take place before the end of the year, the Coordination Committee would form an efficient SMT based, *inter alia*, on the principle of fair geographical representation. In conclusion, the Delegation, speaking on behalf of the Group, expressed its support for all WIPO colleagues and staff affected by the pandemic and wished everybody good health and productive work.

6. The Delegation of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the Group of Central European and Baltic States (CEBS), said that it welcomed that the Assemblies could take place in the context of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, since decisions needed to be made on the Organization's administrative and financial management. It also welcomed that the Organization had been able to continue its work, and was committed to participating constructively in discussions on re-starting work on the normative agenda. It noted that the CEBS Group highly benefited from the ongoing cooperation, technical development and activities carried out by the Department for Transition and Developed Countries (TDC), and looked forward to continued fruitful collaboration in that regard. Lastly, WIPO could harness the innovation and creativity that it promoted to help tackle the global health crisis facing humanity, helping to shape the post-COVID-19 world.

7. The Delegation of China said that the current session of the Assemblies was taking place at a special time. It wished the Assemblies every success under the Chair's excellent leadership, and thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for the excellent arrangements made for the smooth convening of the current session. The Delegation noted that this was a special moment for WIPO because it would have a new leader and start a new chapter of development when the current session closed. Over the past 12 years, Director General Francis Gurry had elevated the Organization to a new level in all its aspects: a more standardized internal management system with steady growth in revenue and assets; an unprecedented expansion in the coverage of the various IP registration systems; the conclusion and entry into force of the Beijing Treaty and a number of other international treaties, which had strengthened the leading role of WIPO in international norm-setting; the provision of substantial technical assistance to developing and least developed countries (LDCs), which had contributed to more balanced, inclusive and efficient global IP systems, and the proactive application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to optimize information systems, which ensured the normal functioning of operations during the pandemic. On behalf of the Government of China, the Delegation expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Director General for his significant contributions. At the same time, the Delegation looked forward to the continued positive development of WIPO under the leadership of the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang. As always, China would support WIPO to play an important role in leading the global IP systems. The Delegation noted that, in response to the impact of

the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coordination Committee would consider the short-term reappointment of the outgoing Deputy Directors General (DDGs) and Assistant Directors General (ADGs) to facilitate the smooth transition of the SMT. China welcomed that initiative and would actively engage in the consultation process. Since the beginning of 2020, the pandemic had posed a grave challenge to global innovation activities. WIPO and its Member States had actively responded to the pandemic and achieved remarkable results. The China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) had also taken a series of measures to provide relief and make its services more accessible to applicants. In the first seven months of 2020, CNIPA received a total of 818,000 patent applications for inventions, 5,171,000 applications for trademark registrations, 36,000 PCT international patent applications, and 4,551 Madrid international trademark applications, all of which had increased, even during the pandemic. China was ready to continue to work with WIPO and Member States to address challenges so as to provide high-quality services to global users, promote global cooperation in innovation, and contribute to economic recovery. In the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR) of China, innovation and technology were important drivers for future economic development. The Hong Kong SAR was committed to enhancing the IP regime to facilitate the development of the innovation and technology ecosystem. On the patent regime, the Hong Kong SAR had embarked on a reform process. In December 2019, the original grant patent system had been launched. Patent applicants had the option of filing standard patent applications directly with the Hong Kong SAR to seek legal protection for a maximum of 20 years. That would greatly facilitate the long-term development of innovation and technology and IP trading. On the copyright regime, the Copyright Ordinance of the Hong Kong SAR was revised in June 2020 to expand copyright exceptions relating to persons with a print disability in order to meet the latest international standards. The Delegation concluded by expressing its wish to share experiences with other parties.

8. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, said that as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the social and economic well-being of people around the world, Group B appreciated WIPO's initiatives to support responses to the pandemic, including its COVID-19 search facility of PATENTSCOPE, its COVID-19 IP Policy Tracker, its Crisis Management Dashboard and its uninterrupted services. Collecting lessons learned from the current unprecedented period would be an important exercise going forward. In that respect, Group B saw the current period as a time to reflect on its key objectives, which included strengthening WIPO's registration and classification systems to ensure their proper functioning and encourage their growth, and facilitating a digital transformation to bring WIPO services closer to enterprises globally. In addition, WIPO should actively contribute to advancing international discussion on IP and AI and on other emerging areas of technology, as new technologies presented new questions about the role of IP and incentivizing and enabling innovation and creativity. WIPO should also take a leading role in discussions where IP was directly linked with other policy areas such as climate change, trade, sustainable development and health. Another key objective was to ensure good governance structures for WIPO, including independent oversight bodies, and in line with the United Nations (UN) common system and its Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations. With its state-of-the-art results-based management, WIPO could further focus on results across the Organization. Internal processes, from decision-making through back-office functions and staff satisfaction morale should not be immune from independent scrutiny.

9. The Delegation of Panama, speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), said the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated the importance of WIPO as a forum for exchanging and exploring ideas and experiences in developing IP systems more resilient to such emergencies and more strongly supportive of economic recovery and access to health care for all, in line with multilateral rules. GRULAC attached great importance to WIPO's work in all areas, and particularly development. WIPO's expanded and improved services, cooperation and technical and regulatory assistance had helped to build a balanced IP system consistent with the 45 recommendations of the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GRULAC was grateful to the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean for its constant support for technical and regulatory cooperation and ability to adapt to changing conditions during the pandemic.

10. The Delegation of Qatar, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, expressed its highest appreciation to the Chair, the Vice-Chairs and the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry. Appreciation was also extended to WIPO officials in charge of the Regional Bureau for Arab Countries, as well as all members of the WIPO Secretariat for continuing to support the work of the Organization despite the Covid-19 pandemic. In that context, the Group expressed its condolences to the families and friends of the staff members of the WIPO Secretariat who had passed away due to the pandemic, as well as to all employees of the WIPO Secretariat. The Group hoped that the international community would be able to overcome the current crisis soon and be ready to prevent any similar pandemic in the future. The Group extended its congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment as Director General of WIPO, and was fully confident that Mr. Tang would continue the work to enhance WIPO's global position and its growing ability to stimulate and harness innovation in order to achieve comprehensive development and prosperity for all. In that regard, the Group expressed its full support to Mr. Tang in carrying out his responsibility with success. Sincere thanks were extended to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his great contribution to the development and success of the Organization. The great effort he had made during his tenure and his dedication to his work to strengthen the global IP system and the DA were no secret to anyone. Deep gratitude was also expressed to Mr. Gurry for the pioneering initiatives he had launched, including but not limited to the Advanced Technology Applications Center. During the previous period, the Arab Group had worked continuously to develop its respective national legislations in line with global developments in the field, and had been guided by WIPO as a leading Organization to achieve its SDGs and build a knowledge-based economy. The Group had also supported the ongoing negotiations in the Organization to develop laws for global protection, in particular the negotiations within the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) and within the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC). The Group looked forward to pursuing that approach and achieving the greatest possible consensus among Member States during the next mandate by Mr. Tang. The Group was aware of the importance that Mr. Tang attached to concluding that process, and his readiness to support it. In conclusion, the Group pointed to the exceptional circumstances that the world was experiencing, expressing its solidarity with WIPO in order to continue the major role played by the Organization in strengthening cooperation between Member States and the crucial services it provided to all Members. Special mention was made to WIPO-supported innovations, which had contributed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways around the world. The Group expressed hope that the crisis could be quickly overcome and that WIPO would continue to lead the development of an effective and comprehensive international IP system that fostered innovation in a way to help achieve sustainable development for all.

11. The Delegation of Viet Nam, speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), welcomed the efforts made to ensure that the Assemblies could take place. In order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and work towards economic recovery, ASEAN was prioritizing the promotion of digital transformation and innovation. The establishment of an electronic filing and receiving system had provided continuity and efficiency in ASEAN processes, and maximized the use of remote working arrangements to ensure timely and quality output in stakeholder services. ASEAN congratulated WIPO and its partners on the launch of the GII 2020, in which ASEAN member states had performed well. Some had maintained their positions in the overall rankings from the 2019 GII, while others had been making steady gains, with Viet Nam making significant progress in its innovation ranking, the Philippines breaking into the top 50 and Thailand ranking first in terms of creative goods exports as a percentage of total trade. ASEAN was also proud to note that the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar

had made it into the 2020 GII. Since the 2019 Assemblies, Malaysia had acceded to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks, Cambodia had acceded to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (the Berne Convention), Indonesia had acceded to the Beijing Treaty, and to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (the Marrakesh Treaty), and Viet Nam had acceded to the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs (the Hague Agreement) and was finalizing its internal processes to accede to the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure (the Budapest Treaty) by early 2021. ASEAN wished to thank WIPO's Singapore Office for its continuous support for the ASEAN region through its collaboration with stakeholders to raise awareness and encourage use of the international IP system to increase innovation and creativity. ASEAN member states looked forward to enhancing and strengthening their engagement with the WIPO Singapore Office, their partnership with WIPO and their cooperation with WIPO Member States.

12. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member states, said that although it respected and supported the decision for the agenda of the current session of the Assemblies to focus on indispensable administrative decisions, it stood ready to continue to work on global IP policy issues at WIPO as soon as the epidemic situation would allow meeting in a safe negotiating environment. COVID-19 and measures to combat the pandemic had serious consequences for the global economy. In that regard, since IP had proven to be a driver of innovation, competitiveness and economic development, a strong and balanced IP system would be crucial not only for developing vaccines and medicines, but also for global economic recovery. Accordingly, it was particularly important for businesses and SMEs, in particular, to have robust support from the institutions that managed IP. WIPO was encouraged to continue examining how it could effectively contribute to combating the global health crisis and stimulate global economic recovery. In that context, closer cooperation was needed with the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO) in order to ensure that IP issues were appropriately and competently addressed in discussions. Robust IP arrangements were needed to foster innovation and the rapid development of vaccines and therapeutics while ensuring fair and global access to all. In addition, since the matter of AI and data economy was changing the ways in which people thought, worked and interacted, WIPO's ongoing engagement in that area would be welcome. Lastly, the Delegation welcomed that the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications (the Lisbon Agreement) had entered into force in February 2020 after the European Union's successful accession to the Act, and encouraged others to join the system.

13. The Delegation of Malawi, speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), noted that the LDCs required assistance from WIPO in leveraging IP and innovation to achieve the SDGs, particularly against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had thrown into sharp relief the digital divide between developed countries and the LDCs. Indeed, bridging that divide in the spirit of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action was vital to the LDCs' socio-economic development. The Group greatly appreciated WIPO activities for the benefit of LDCs, particularly appropriate technology projects, WIPO Academy programs, and national, regional and inter-regional training with an emphasis on developing skills and accessing technical, scientific and patent information. It also lauded the Government of Sweden for funding the Advanced International Training Program on Intellectual Property in the Global Economy for the Least Developed Countries. The Delegation noted the need for robust global cooperation and hoped that the updated study on access to medical technologies and innovation jointly launched by WIPO, the WHO and the WTO in July 2020 would help to ensure equitable, non-discriminatory access to trade, health and innovation for the LDCs in particular. As a number of countries were on the verge of graduating from LDC status, the Delegation

urged WIPO to consider designing and planning programs to help those countries to address the challenges that they faced before and after their graduation.

14. The Delegation of Azerbaijan, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), commended the outgoing Director General for his dedication to addressing the needs of developing countries by fostering inclusive and sustainable growth through IP. It looked forward to working with the new Director General to explore the best opportunities for developing cooperation between WIPO and NAM. NAM attached great importance to its cooperation activities with WIPO, which were crucial to the socio-economic development of NAM member states and the further improvement of their IP systems. The NAM member states reiterated their commitment to continuing to work on matters of concern to developing countries, in particular by mobilizing advanced technical support, streamlining the development dimension of WIPO activities through the effective implementation of the 45 DA recommendations and promoting creativity and innovation. NAM member states would participate in future discussions in a constructive manner with a view to reaching concrete conclusions while balancing the interests of different countries. In that regard, it wished to stress the importance of fair and balanced geographical representation in WIPO's Secretariat. In the difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to strengthen multilateralism and reinforce international cooperation and solidarity to respond to the global challenge and overcome its unprecedented repercussions. The NAM member states, which had always put the values of multilateralism at the forefront, would use those goals as guiding principles in their engagement with WIPO.

15. The Delegation of Afghanistan highlighted the importance of IP in the country. After joining WIPO in 2005, Afghanistan had ratified seven laws on intellectual property rights (IPRs) and had established a legal scheme for IP protection. In 2007, Afghanistan had established its Intellectual Property Board, which was in charge of policymaking on IP-related issues. In recent years, Afghanistan's IP office had recorded a number of achievements, including the establishment of standards offices, creation of databases, integration of systems, drafting and codification of regulations and guidelines and training in IP. The country had registered 29,400 trademarks to date. In 2020, it had registered 82 dispute cases, created associations for geographical indications and evaluated four agro-products in four zones. Afghanistan had created a demo database for patents and had received 67 domestic patent requests. More than 822 foreign patents were also being registered. Nevertheless, IPRs were still a new field for the country, which lacked qualified IP experts, including specialized judges. IP was not taught in most of the country's universities, and the Government had more to learn with regard to international IP treaty systems. In recent months, the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations Office and International Organizations in Geneva and officials from Afghanistan's IP office had been in communication with WIPO's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. Afghanistan was looking forward to receiving support from WIPO in the following areas: conducting a needs assessment of the country's IP sector and developing a plan for IP reform; providing online and in-person training to IP staff, judges, lawyers and educators; and organizing exposure visits for the country's IP experts to other countries in the region sharing similarities with Afghanistan in the field of IP.

16. The Delegation of Albania said that, despite the challenges and unusual working conditions owing to the current pandemic, the country had remained committed to promoting IP, as was evident through its more than 18,500 entries in the WIPO Global Brand Database, and its ongoing efforts to implement its National Intellectual Property Strategy (2016-2020). In that context, its General Directorate of Industrial Property, which played the role of technical secretariat, had collected data from the relevant entities involved, and had compiled a matrix of achievements for the planned indicators. A new strategic document for 2021-2025 was being drafted with the technical support of WIPO and would be finalized in early 2021. At the national level, Albania had drafted amendments to its Law 9947 on Industrial Property with a view to aligning it with a European trade secrets directive by the end of 2020, and amendments were also being made in relation to the inspection body with a view to adopting legal provisions and

procedures for administrative protection against IPR infringements. Albania continued to promote IPR and the importance of IP registration in various businesses and universities in different categories and districts. In relation to cooperation, Albania had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Austrian Patent Office in December 2019, and had established a fourth informative and scientific center in December 2019, in a technical university, in line with its National IP Strategy. With the technical and financial support of WIPO, Albania had completed its adaptation of a training manual for judges and prosecutors on how to deal with IP crime, which was its judiciary system's first IP-related manual. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the April 26, 2020 "World IP Day" had been promoted *via* a media campaign and social networks. Albania looked forward to deepening its cooperation with WIPO in terms of IPR-related capacity-building and technical assistance.

17. The Delegation of Algeria, aligned itself with the statements made by the groups of which it was a member. The Delegation called for the focus of the international IP system to be directed to the challenges of development, including ways to reduce the technology gap and ensure equitable distribution of the fruits of scientific and technological progress. With the global challenges now facing humanity, the Delegation called on WIPO to play a leading role in promoting innovation and to adapt its technical cooperation programs to better meet the needs of Member States, in particular through technological transfers and achievement of the SDGs. With the support of WIPO's External Office in Algiers, Algeria had begun to develop a national strategy for promoting and developing IP in the country, in line with new economic policies in the areas of knowledge, innovation, start-up companies and SMEs.

18. The Delegation of Angola supported the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe, on behalf of the African Group, and by Malawi on behalf of the LDCs. Angola's development strategy was focused on measures intended to diversify its highly oil-dependent economy. The goal was to step up domestic productive capacity and increase exports with a view to creating conditions to improve the business environment in order to make the domestic market more attractive to all potential investors. In spite of the pandemic, Angola had pressed on with state and legislative reforms, streamlining power structures. The country had also prioritized educating the country's leadership and other stakeholders on the importance of the use of culture and protection of IPRs. Therefore, the Delegation expressed hope that it could continue to count on the valuable support of WIPO. In 2020, the country had inaugurated the Trade, Intellectual and Industrial Property Bench of the Luanda Law Courts, a national first which would, *inter alia*, treat cases on the exercise of rights in a corporate context, copyright and industrial property. The Delegation appreciated WIPO's assistance in support of the Industrial Property Act, intended to replace the outdated Industrial Property Act of February 28, 1992. Angola was now able to benefit from Industrial Property Automation System (IPAS) technological support, which was committed to modernizing the system of industrial property services in Angola, ensuring compliance of the system with international standards and criteria. Thus, the Angolan Institute for Industrial Property (IAPI) had laid the groundwork at local level to facilitate digitalization of files across all protected modes, ahead of future migration once the software was installed. Given the specificity and complexity of the subject matter, one of the main challenges IAPI faced was building the capacity of patent and trademark examiners. Hence, the Delegation called on WIPO to focus specifically on supporting the process, as competent human resources were a key parameter of efficient and effective job performance.

19. The Delegation of Argentina aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. With governments and the private sector concentrating efforts on COVID-19, and given WIPO's stable finances, the Delegation suggested directing the Organization's resources towards strategic goals and developing balanced IP programs to encourage development, support the SDGs and implement the DA's 45 recommendations. It would be necessary as a post-pandemic priority to create a resilient and balanced IP system that would protect IPRs while also ensuring access to health care and food, as well as transfers and dissemination of knowledge and technology. Given the importance of IP for innovation as

well as economic, social and cultural development, the National Institute of Industrial Property of Argentina had introduced measures to ensure the continuity of its operations, which had kept the filing and handling of IPRs requests at the same level as for the corresponding portion of 2019. The Delegation was pleased to announce a new Argentine Master's program in IP and the country's participation in WIPO GREEN, alongside Chile and Brazil. The Delegation encouraged further work to improve geographical representation and gender balance at all levels of WIPO.

20. The Delegation of Australia said that the outgoing Director General had enabled WIPO to refocus more directly on its customers and stakeholders to provide more efficient and cost-effective services at a time of ever-increasing demand for IP, and to be at the vanguard of IP policy relating to technological developments. Indeed, IP would play a significant role in the current time of considerable global challenges and disruption, and it was hoped that the global IP regime would incentivize innovation and creativity under the Organization's new leadership. Australia was committed to working with WIPO and Member States as the world continued to adapt to current and future challenges. It welcomed continued cooperation and constructive discussion in WIPO's committees and working groups and maintained its strong support for ongoing improvements to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and to the Madrid Protocol. Member States were again urged to join the Marrakesh Treaty, to spread its clear humanitarian benefits. Australia also reaffirmed its strong commitment to working with WIPO and Member States to ensure that the international IP system fulfilled its social and economic purposes and served innovators, creators and businesses.

21. The Delegation of Austria aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states. The Delegation stressed how IP stimulated creativity and innovation and contributed to economic, cultural and social development, especially in difficult times. The Delegation commended WIPO's activities as outlined in the Director General's Report to the 2020 Assemblies, and particularly its technical assistance and support for ongoing adherence to WIPO-administered treaties and greater use of international IP systems. With respect to the international IP registration and filing systems, the Delegation welcomed the introduction of a COVID-19 search facility and encouraged WIPO to continue its response to the global health and economic crisis in cooperation with the WHO, the WTO and other international organizations. The Delegation appreciated the reports from the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC), the External Auditor and the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD), acknowledging WIPO's financial health and ability to react to unpredictable circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. With regard to the Madrid System, the Delegation was ready to adopt the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Regulations under the Madrid Protocol, as set out in document MM/A/54/1, requiring trademark applicants, holders and their representatives to provide WIPO's International Bureau with an e-mail address – to remain unpublished – for electronic communication in case of disruptions to postal communication. Regarding COVID-related uncertainties concerning the timeliness of claims of priority under Article 4 of the Paris Convention and its application under the PCT, the Madrid System and The Hague System, the Delegation welcomed the non-binding guidance proposed by the Paris Union Assembly, as set out in document P/A/56/1. That guidance, while recognizing the ultimate competence of member state offices in this regard, provided helpful information and advice on how to tackle related challenges at national level. As a member of the WIPO Coordination Committee, Austria took note of the proposed exceptional re-appointments of seven members of the current SMT for an additional three months, as set out in document WO/CC/78/4. Austria was prepared to accept the proposals in paragraphs 11 and 12 to re-appoint DDGs and ADGs and thus help the Director General manage the transition to a new team through the end of 2020.

22. The Delegation of Azerbaijan noted the ongoing changes in the world and that sometimes the dialectics of change were dictated by completely unforeseen circumstances that required

important decisions to be made in the face of *force majeure*. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected all social institutions, shaken established relations, imposed new forms of communication and interaction, and, worst of all, had taken the lives of many people, including those whose work had contributed to the creation of values for different cultures and civilizations. The tragic circumstances had reminded the current generation of the fragility of public welfare and had posed new challenges for the future, showing that the globalized world was very small and that all nations were together in the same boat. At the same time, the Delegation expressed its confidence that, despite the temporary social and physical isolation, which, in the present situation, was the most accessible remedy for saving lives and ensuring the functioning of social systems, unity based on common interests remained its strength. Azerbaijan had initiated a videoconference of Turkic-speaking countries on joint actions in the face of COVID-19. During the video-summit under NAM's "Together against COVID-19" framework, held on his initiative on May 4, 2020, and dedicated to the fight against COVID-19, the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, had said that countries would defeat the pandemic together. In his speech at the summit, he had proposed to hold a special session of the UN General Assembly at the level of heads of state and government in a videoconference format. That initiative was already supported by more than 130 UN member states. Azerbaijan had also provided a voluntary donation to the WHO and humanitarian aid to more than 30 countries. As for the world of IP, in which imagination, intuition, heuristics, erudition and intelligence were celebrated, knowledge accumulated second by second made it possible to adequately respond to emerging challenges. The Delegation pointed out the exceptional role of competence in its national decision making, minimizing losses and ensuring a balance between the risks to public health and a stagnating economy. Indeed, such management skills implied true courage, facilitating an objective evaluation of risks and hazards and, at the same time, being mentally prepared to overcome them. The Delegation emphasized that the flexible and proactive measures taken by the authorities of Azerbaijan had allowed the exceptional situation to be overcome successfully and established the normal working of social institutions. Huge funds had been allocated to ensure adequate functioning of the health care system, strengthen its infrastructure and support business during quarantine. Dozens of hospitals, including modular ones, had been put into operation and a significant reserve of hospital beds had been created, as well as dozens of laboratories for testing. Azerbaijan was among the world leaders by the number of tests per capita. Other measures included tax breaks and benefits for entrepreneurs, and subsidies for the most vulnerable groups in the population. Azerbaijan was not on the lists of countries that had applied for assistance from international financial institutions, and Azerbaijan had reached 54<sup>th</sup> place on the SDGs Index, according to a new UN report. WHO had assessed Azerbaijan's efforts in the context of the pandemic as exemplary and had proposed its model as an effective platform for action. All such actions were based on the careful and sensitive attitude of the country's leadership towards its citizens, following the motto of the President that the country's most important task was to protect its people and the state. The general objective of the Intellectual Property Agency of Azerbaijan was to promote broad economic reforms implemented by the national government, and to turn the Agency into an active player in economic development; in other words, to support investment and promote innovation. At the same time, the Agency also addressed a number of issues with the aim of stimulating qualitative developments in the innovation ecosystem. New digital services had been introduced to accelerate patent activity and ensure its transparency; new systems for the protection of digital IPRs had been developed; within the framework of automation of the IP system, the WIPO IPAS System had been implemented; serious measures had been taken to increase inventive and patent activity; extrajudicial methods of dispute settlement, specifically mediation, had been updated; and the process of creating specialized IP courts had begun. Systematic work on commercialization and technology transfer had been carried out within the framework of the joint WIPO IP policy for academics and research institutions version 3.0; in particular, the establishment of technology commercialization and transfer centers was in progress. However, the Agency was not able to carry out the planned international activities in cooperation with WIPO, including those dedicated to IP and AI. The Delegation concluded by



thanking Mr. Francis Gurry, whose term as Director General of WIPO was coming to an end. His professionalism, dedication and high culture had been key to the success of many ventures within WIPO. The effective work of Mr. Francis Gurry as Director General had affected the development of the entire international IP system and had fostered innovation, creativity and sustainable development. In Azerbaijan, Mr. Gurry would always be remembered with a warm heart. The Delegation also congratulated Mr. Daren Tang on his election as the new Director General of WIPO. The Delegation was confident that, in that position, Mr. Tang would make an important contribution to WIPO's mandate and objectives, and would promote innovation and creativity through the development of a global IP enforcement system. The Delegation assured the new Director General of Azerbaijan's support and cooperation in his work.

23. The Delegation of Bangladesh aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The COVID-19 pandemic was exacting a terrible human toll and disrupting the global economy, with its multifaceted adverse impacts on economic growth and development already evident worldwide. Healthcare and access to any COVID-19 vaccines and medicines yet to be developed remained the utmost priority. To that end, it was necessary to be careful, considerate and compassionate so that IPRs did not create barriers to the universal, timely, fair and equitable production of, access to and distribution of quality, safe, efficacious and affordable health technologies and products essential for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19. In that regard, WIPO should play a robust role in IP-related health policy issues in coordination with other relevant multilateral entities, such as the WHO and the WTO. Bangladesh was contending with COVID-19 while working towards graduating from LDC status. The Delegation therefore wished to reiterate its call for WIPO to consider designing and planning programs for graduating LDCs in order to help them to cope with the transition and the loss of the benefits they enjoyed as LDCs. It would be timely to undertake studies on the IP-related implications of graduation from LDC status and the actions required to tackle them, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

24. The Delegation of Belarus thanked Director General Mr. Francis Gurry for his dedicated work in strengthening WIPO's capacities, enhancing its international image and building fruitful cooperation with the Member States of the Organization, and expressed the hope that that work would continue under the leadership of the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang. It stated that Belarus was ready to further develop its cooperation with WIPO to strengthen the role of IP in the development of the economy and society. The Delegation noted that, following the visit of Director General Mr. Francis Gurry to Minsk and his meeting with the Head of State in June 2019, Belarus had begun active work on a national IP strategy for 2021-2030. The purpose of this strategy was to create the essential conditions for transforming IP into an effective tool for the socioeconomic and cultural development of Belarus. On October 22, 2020, Belarus would become a full member of the Marrakesh Treaty. Work towards the accession of Belarus to the Hague Agreement had been accelerated. At present, the relevant draft law was under consideration by the government. Belarus was interested in expanding its cooperation with WIPO for a wider introduction of the e-PCT and IPAS electronic systems, as well as to establish a national IP mediation center in Minsk. Belarus actively promoted IP cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union, which was chaired by Belarus in 2020, and actively cooperated with the patent offices of countries in the region: the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and others. Belarus, as a high-tech industrial country, had confirmed its readiness to organize and host the WIPO Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Design Law Treaty (DLT).

25. The Delegation of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation welcomed the hybrid format adopted for the Assemblies, allowing delegates to represent their countries despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation regretted that scheduled meetings could not be held and hoped discussions could resume as soon as possible under equal and transparent conditions. Bolivia (Plurinational State of) considered IP extremely important to economic and social

development and stressed the need to strike the right balance among incentives, creativity, innovation and the enforcement of rights, such as access to medicines and knowledge. Despite the pandemic, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) had not stopped protecting IPRs and had continued using virtual tools and inclusive programs to strengthen IP protection. The Delegation reiterated its commitment to continue working with WIPO to complete ongoing projects and start new ones in the areas of technical assistance, capacity building and relations between WIPO and Member States.

26. The Delegation of Botswana, aligning itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group, said that the COVID-19 pandemic required Member States to be ever more creative and versatile. It was therefore appreciative that the Assemblies could be held to make critical decisions, with a view to moving forward with the Organization's work. The Delegation was also grateful for the various programs and technical support from which Botswana and other developing countries, particularly in Africa, had benefited. That support was helping Botswana develop IP and its economic contribution. The Delegation would continue to offer its support and cooperation in the fulfilment of the objectives of WIPO. Considering the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health systems and economies worldwide, innovative ways could be used to address critical matters, including at WIPO. The Delegation therefore welcomed the truncation of the Assembly agenda and convening of an extraordinary session of the Assemblies in 2021. The Delegation closed by reiterating its commitment to working with other Member States during the 2020 Assemblies.

27. The Delegation of Brazil said that the heavy human and economic costs of the COVID-19 global crisis was currently making creativity and innovation crucial, not only for scientists and researchers to find solutions to the crisis, but also because guaranteeing adequate and timely incentives to authors, creators and entrepreneurs to resist the crisis period would create the conditions for continuous improvement of production processes and rapid economic recovery after the pandemic period. The COVID-19 pandemic posed a great domestic challenge to Brazil. Brazilian society as a whole was striving to mitigate its negative impacts, as was the Government of Brazil *via* international cooperation programs and national socioeconomic policies seeking to preserve the income and jobs of Brazilians. Cooperation with WIPO was essential to Brazil's external IP strategy. Their many multifaceted joint initiatives included WIPO Lex-Judgements, WIPO ALERT and WIPO GREEN. The Delegation paid particular tribute to the WIPO DA projects, strongly promoted by Brazil. The ongoing cooperation between Brazil and WIPO to develop a collective brand for producers in remote Tefé was an example of how WIPO could promote initiatives with positive social impact in developing countries. Brazil hoped and expected that WIPO's prosperity would increasingly target initiatives that bring IP to life in national economies and in communities like Tefé. Brazil believed that WIPO should serve and be seen as a global platform for that type of transformation. Internally, progress was continuing in the consultation process with all stakeholders for creating the first National Intellectual Property Strategy for the regulatory and operational modernization of the IP and innovation ecosystem in Brazil, including for aspects related to enforcement and repression of crimes against IP. That strategy would provide for Brazil's progressive alignment with WIPO instruments and programs, thereby consolidating ties and guaranteeing international partners a more favorable, balanced, safe and profitable business and investment environment. The Budapest Treaty had recently been submitted to the National Congress. The Madrid System, in effect in Brazil for less than a year, was showing consistent results in spite of the circumstances. Brazil was already the 18<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of the system's designations, 13 per cent of which referred to Brazilian brands. The National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) was making great strides towards providing increasingly efficient services to rights holders and users of the IP system, as shown by the significant advances in meeting the goals of the National Patent Backlog Combat Plan. INPI was providing a new range of services focused on promoting business and fostering innovation and international partnerships, such as the "INPI Negócios" and "Vitrine de PI" initiatives. With regard to observance of IPRs, achievements had been made in border control, *via* the National Border Security Program (VIGIA) initiative to incorporate

public security agents to combat organized crime along the 15,000 km of Brazil's land border. Achievements had also been made in regulatory initiatives, such as the launch of guides of good practices in electronic commerce, means of payment and Internet advertising. The results of that government-body cooperation with private sector and international partners were recognized in official publications such as the United Kingdom's "Annual IP crime and enforcement report: 2019 to 2020". In addition to commending the outgoing Director General, the Delegation of Brazil welcomed the Director General-Elect and stated he would have a great political and diplomatic partner in Brazil. Brazil perceived many challenges ahead and the need to both revitalize WIPO's normative agenda and ensure that IP is a catalyst for economic growth and development, especially during the current great economic challenges. Designing customized and pragmatic solutions to these challenges would require sophistication, representativeness and diversity in the Secretariat, especially in its senior management positions. Brazil believed that WIPO's service offer to its Members should, in addition to protection and promotion of IPRs, include promotion of favorable business environments and investment opportunities as well as creativity and innovation, especially in developing countries. Brazil was prepared to assist the new Director General in his noble and challenging mission at WIPO.

28. The Delegation of Bulgaria aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Germany, on behalf of the European Union and its member states, as well as by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group. The Delegation believed that it had become important to find new ways to work, given the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on normal life and for international organizations, economies, national IP offices and negotiation processes. The Delegation considered the exploration of new horizons more important than ever and welcomed the rise in technological innovation. The global economy needed a creative and flexible approach to digitalization and AI to strengthen the role and importance of IP, as well as a strong and sustainable system for protecting IP, to encourage and harness innovation and facilitate relations between business and creators. The Delegation commended WIPO for developing and disseminating a wide range of new electronic services, including the PATENTSCOPE database, the online Dashboard for monitoring operations, the WIPO Docket newsletter and the tool for tracking IP policy information in Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation thanked Mr. Francis Gury for his leadership and for promoting and modernizing the IP system. Over the previous 12 years, WIPO had grown, reformed and modernized, introducing new programs and services while staying within budget. Bulgaria had enjoyed a fruitful and long-lasting cooperation with WIPO and had organized a number of projects to create incentives for IP development and stimulate activity for Bulgarian businesses. Joint initiatives with WIPO had benefitted experts, IP representatives, students and end users, opening their minds to new opportunities. The Delegation expressed its appreciation for the support provided by the TDC.

29. The Delegation of Cambodia associated itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and by the Delegation of Malawi on behalf of LDCs. The Delegation hoped that the incoming Director General would work to increase the active participation of LDCs in WIPO committees. The Government of Cambodia, having made IP an important part of its comprehensive economic policy, had made significant efforts to adopt IP-related laws and regulations. Cambodia was in the process of implementing various ongoing projects, including the National IP Strategy 2020-2025, the modernization of the administration system, the establishment of Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs), and drafting and amending IP laws and regulations. Having recognized IP as a tool for development, Cambodia had espoused a number of international agreements, conventions, and treaties. It had so far signed the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks, the PCT, the Hague Agreement, the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement, and the Beijing Treaty. It was, in principle, ready to sign the Berne Convention and would deposit the instrument of accession with WIPO once COVID-19 constraints allowed. In addition, Cambodia was preparing an Industry 4.0 strategy and

improving its Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, as well as encouraging SMEs to utilize IP for their productive development and entry into global markets. Cambodia had improved its ranking in the GII and had managed to achieve an average GDP growth of more than 7 per cent per year over the last decade. The Delegation expressed its gratitude to WIPO and all relevant stakeholders and development partners for their continuous support.

30. The Delegation of Canada reiterated the strong commitment of its country to the normative work of WIPO. It said that Canada was party to a number of WIPO treaties and was determined to advance all of the committees' work. The aim of Canada to implement five WIPO treaties, including the Hague Agreement and the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement concerning the International Registration of Marks, had now been achieved through its ratification of the Patent Law Treaty (PLT) in October 2019. Canada was pleased to have hosted the twenty-seventh session of the meeting of international authorities under the PCT. Noting the importance of collaboration and communication in the context of COVID-19, the Delegation commended WIPO and IP Offices for their role in that respect, and said that Canada was pleased to have contributed to such joint efforts by sharing experiences and best practices. While further COVID-19-related challenges lay ahead, Canada affirmed its commitment to consensus-based decision-making, good governance and financial stewardship in all of the work of WIPO. To ensure that key files moved forward, Canada supported the resumption of meetings, whether they required a virtual presence or an alternative approach, to ensure the full and effective participation of all Member States.

31. The Delegation of Chile aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation thanked the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his endeavors and ongoing commitment on issues of particular importance to Chile and the Secretariat for its support. IP was an important engine for development, adding value to products and services and contributing to global trade. As the world confronted the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO must guide countries in making full use of the benefits of IP and continue to promote balanced IP ecosystems that stimulated innovation and served the interests of society as a whole, encouraging the development of creative solutions for the benefit of humanity. The Organization had made considerable progress in recent years and its positive financial situation reflected the increasingly important role played by IP in the development of countries. That was even more the case in the context of the pandemic, which had had a significant impact on the work of the Organization's committees. In spite of the necessary and radical changes in working methods, the Delegation was confident that meetings would go ahead in the new hybrid modality. Important initiatives had recently been undertaken in Chile, including the establishment of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation, which would advise on policies, plans and programs to promote and strengthen science, technology and innovation. The National Institute of Industrial Property (INAPI) had been recognized for the fourth consecutive year as one of the most innovative trademark offices in the world, reflecting the quality of its services and improvements offered to its innovators, which were part of its institutional strategic plan aimed at generating impact on the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Examples of initiatives included the launching of the digital patent files platform and the implementation of the online payment of final patent rights, PCT patent applications and trademark appeal fees; the presentation of the national training plan for technology transfer; the holding of international discussion sessions on cooperation in the area of IP; and the launch by INAPI of its Running initiative on COVID-19 technologies. INAPI had joined the Global Patent Prosecution Highway, making it possible for national applicants to have their patent applications fast-tracked in any of the 27 offices party to the agreement. The Institute had also worked in key areas with WIPO, including on a matchmaking project in the wine sector that had been rolled out successfully under the auspices of WIPO GREEN. The establishment of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage was a milestone. For the first time in Chile, it had been given direct powers to promote respect for copyright and related rights. The Department of Intellectual Rights had launched a new online platform, CRIN, for registering copyright and

related rights with a view to facilitating the registration of works, pseudonyms and phonograms. All those initiatives reflected the growing importance of copyright with respect to artistic creation and culture. The Undersecretariat for International Economic Relations had continued to work with trading partners on improving IP and thereby providing legal certainty to their exporters with regard to their innovations and creations. All the above was just a small sample of how a practical and user-friendly approach had been adopted to place the issue on the national agenda. That had been recognized in the GII, in which Chile continued to lead in the region. The progress made had in part been due to assistance provided by WIPO. It was to be hoped that the Organization and its Member States would continue to help to promote innovation and creativity for the benefit of the economic, social and cultural development of all countries, and that all the above-mentioned initiatives, at different levels of development, would provide an important boost to industrial property in Chile, as a key to increasing investment, promoting innovation and stimulating economic and social development. It was vital to support the region's SMEs and WIPO could play an essential role by making IP a key to the full integration of such enterprises in global value chains.

32. The Delegation of Colombia aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. In a time of unprecedented change due to the global health emergency, Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to work with WIPO in collaborative IP development programs related to registration, training, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and other topics. The President of Colombia, Dr. Iván Duque Márquez, had recently had the honor to open the WIPO Conference on the Global Digital Content Market alongside Mr. Francis Gurry, and to present to WIPO Member States Colombia's institutional development efforts aimed at driving the orange economy. In the previous two years, the Government had established the Vice-Ministry for the Orange Economy and Creative Industries and the National Council for the Orange Economy to develop a cross-cutting vision of culture and connect it with the SDGs. The orange economy concept had evolved into a public policy closely related to WIPO's objectives. Since innovation and creativity were key to Colombia's growth and economic development, the country would continue to work with WIPO to promote strategies, programs and activities to stimulate the orange sector. Colombia had been updating its national IP strategy in line with commitments under its productive development policy. It was now essential to continue this work with WIPO and build a modern policy to strengthen IP as a tool for boosting productivity and competition through increased innovation, creativity and technology transfer. Colombia was interested in acceding to the Hague Agreement, which would be vital to simplify and internationalize the registration of Colombia's designs. The country had been making progress in these efforts, which would require technical and legal assistance from WIPO to be effectively and properly implemented.

33. The Delegation of the Congo associated itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. It noted that fostering innovation and creativity for the economic, social and cultural development of States required not only an effective and balanced global IP system, but also efforts at the domestic and regional levels. Accordingly, in spite of the challenges that it faced, not least the current health crisis, the Government of the Congo, together with the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), would be hosting the eighth edition of the African Invention and Technological Innovation Fair (SAIIT), on the theme of IP, innovation and health challenges, from October 15 to 18, 2020.

34. The Delegation of Costa Rica reaffirmed its commitment to continue participating actively in WIPO's various committees. It was counting in particular on the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) to continue preparing a draft document on exceptions and limitations to patent rights to achieve a balance favorable to consumers in the exercise of such rights. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Delegation called for continuing discussion on challenges and opportunities around the licensing of health technology patents, as well as initiatives for publicly accessible databases on the legal status of patents for medicines and vaccines. There were concerns in the SCP about differences in the treatment of "nation

branding” in different countries, where changes were needed. The Delegation called for the identification of harmonized multilateral options for ensuring the maximum protection for nation brands in different jurisdictions. Within the SCCR, Costa Rica was committed to continuing its support for the exchange of information on copyright limitations and exceptions for libraries, archives, museums, and educational and research establishments, institutions for which the country’s copyright laws provided no limitations or exceptions. Costa Rica also looked forward to constructive discussion on copyright challenges arising from the digital environment. The country considered IP vital to sustainable development as well as innovation, helping to incentivize new processes and technologies conducive to achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Innovation, clean technologies and digitalization would be key transformative tools for rebuilding a post-pandemic world and establishing more holistic sustainable development models attuned to humanity as well as nature.

35. The Delegation of Côte d’Ivoire aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation was pleased to announce that, on September 17, 2020, Côte d’Ivoire had deposited with the Director General its instrument of ratification for the Marrakesh Treaty. In view of the reduced agenda, the Delegation had no doubt that the work of the Assemblies would be carried out in a convivial atmosphere and produce the successful outcomes expected.

36. The Delegation of Croatia emphasized how technological changes and digitalization had been testing the limits and applicability of existing IP concepts, noting in particular the important implications of AI. The Delegation endorsed WIPO’s support for the effective use of IP for SMEs, given their substantial contribution to economic growth and social stability. SMEs had been given high priority during Croatia’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union and that priority, in terms of an IP system allowing entrepreneurs greater flexibility, should be maintained in the current extraordinary context. The pandemic had given greater urgency in particular to digital transformation. WIPO had adapted admirably through such *ad hoc* measures as webcasting for certain committees, demonstrating how technological advances could facilitate work and communication despite physical distance. The Delegation called for the application of such modern technologies to WIPO’s External Offices, enabling them to address new and pressing challenges. The Delegation acknowledged the Secretariat’s support for a conference held on “Intellectual Property for the European Union in a World of Challenges”, in February 2020 in Zagreb, a flagship event during Croatia’s Presidency of the European Union Council. The conference, whose conclusions had now been published for the benefit of non-European Union member states, had covered such topics as customized support for SMEs, the data economy and green policies.

37. The Delegation of the Czech Republic aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group. The Czech Republic continued to support WIPO as a global forum for IP services, policy information and cooperation and attached great importance to its efficient and accessible IPRs system, which encouraged innovation and creativity, promoted the diffusion of knowledge and facilitated technology transfer for economic and social growth. It also supported all of WIPO’s activities that took account of the needs of IP system users and continued to attach great value to the improvement of WIPO’s global IP protection systems. The Delegation was grateful that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO had found new ways of continuing its work, through virtual meetings, for example. It recalled that it appreciated the efforts of the members of the Lisbon Union to eliminate the Union’s budget deficit and had been actively engaged in the deliberations of the Working Group on the Development of the Lisbon System to ensure the Union’s long-term financial sustainability. Turning to WIPO’s normative activities, the Delegation hoped that Member States could finally agree to convene a diplomatic conference for the adoption of the DLT. The Delegation was convinced that the IGC was the appropriate forum for discussions on disclosure requirements in such a treaty. The Czech Republic was actively involved in the work of the SCCR and believed

that the Committee would reach consensus on a treaty text for the protection of broadcasting organizations that met current and future protection needs. The Delegation supported the proposal to include resale rights on the agenda of the SCCR. It was satisfied with the progress made by the SCP but expected it to hold a more technical debate on substantive patent law harmonization. The Government continued to support the work of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE) and welcomed the growing contribution of Member States from all regions to its work. AI being a priority for the Czech Republic, it hoped that further sessions of the WIPO debate on IP and AI could be held again soon. The Czech IP Office would welcome study visits and internships organized with WIPO. Finally, the Delegation remained ready to continue close cooperation with WIPO.

38. The Delegation of Denmark, observing that innovation was a key driver of economic growth, said that research and development were needed to ensure sustainable growth to combat the many global challenges facing society at all levels of development. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown the importance of having a strong and balanced IPRs system and businesses therefore needed robust support from the institutions managing IP. IP was essential for harvesting the fruits of innovation to promote development and the economy, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer. WIPO played a key role as the Organization could promote the protection of IPRs globally through cooperation between Member States. Therefore, continuous efforts were required to ensure that WIPO delivered cost-efficient, fit-for-purpose IP services to provide users with first-rate products. Highlighting the main IP developments in Denmark, the Delegation said that, in 2020, an anti-counterfeiting awareness campaign, run by the Danish Patent and Trademark Office, had successfully reached more than one third of the Danish population. In collaboration with nine social media influencers, the campaign had reached a million young people, and another million consumers through other media. The Nordic Patent Institute, a PCT search and examination authority, jointly founded by Iceland, Norway and Denmark, continued to deliver high-quality products to its applicants. Finally, Denmark was committed to contributing in a positive, constructive and pragmatic manner to WIPO and its bodies. The efficient functioning of the Organization's global IP services was important to Danish users and WIPO should strive to deliver world-class services.

39. The Delegation of Djibouti aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation lamented that earlier gains towards achieving the SDGs and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had been reversed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had in fact aggravated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities in many countries, underscoring the need to address longstanding and emerging development concerns and economic divides within and between countries. Most developing and LDCs had acceded to WIPO-administered treaties in the hope that IP would help them strengthen their development policies, promote innovation, attract foreign investment, develop globally competitive businesses and take advantage of new technologies. Djibouti stood ready to engage with Member States in developing COVID-19 recovery plans based on international cooperation, solidarity and technical assistance.

40. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea observed that the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications and the Beijing Treaty had entered into force in 2020 and would help to simplify the international framework for the protection of appellations of origin and expand the IPRs of actors and other performers. The Delegation recognized WIPO's work in recent years in developing a method for the timely and effective management of IP applications in line with increased interest in IPRs and WIPO activities. It had also introduced a new AI application for records and translations of meetings. The Delegation said that IP protection should focus on substantially contributing to the development of science and technology as the key to tackling global challenges such as climate change, food crises and pandemics. There had been remarkable scientific and technological findings in those fields, but they had not been practically applied to overcome the challenges mentioned. In pursuing the UN's SDGs, WIPO should drive science, technology and

innovation in accordance with its mandate, and play a catalytic role to help realize scientific and technological achievements. The Delegation recognized the importance of considering ethical issues in connection with IP protection and WIPO activities. While many countries had been developing vaccines and therapeutics for COVID-19, some countries and pharmaceutical companies were attempting to monopolize vaccines and drugs through the use of patent rights, treating the global health crisis as a financial opportunity. That approach could raise moral and ethical issues, with life and death weighed against a country's economic power and the ability of its people to pay. The development of an IP system for scientific and technological achievements, particularly in the health sector, was vital to the well-being of all people and the protection of inventors' rights. WIPO should consider devising an institutional mechanism to keep IPRs from being abused for unethical or commercial purposes in the health sector. An IP system enabling developed and developing countries to share benefits was also needed. The Delegation recalled that a diplomatic conference to be convened for the adoption of a DLT had been postponed for several years by countries opposed to its article on technical cooperation for developing countries. Progress in adopting new norms guaranteeing developing country interests – protecting traditional knowledge (TK) and genetic resources (GRs), for instance – had also been limited. In creating new international norms for the protection of IPRs, Member States should cooperate to reduce the knowledge gap between developed and developing countries and establish a fair global IP system. At the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the 7<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, as Chair of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, had called science and technology inexhaustible strategic assets that should serve as a beacon to illuminate the way forward for national development. A slogan of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was to make a leap forward by dint of science and guarantee the future by dint of education. In that spirit, the country was taking practical measures to refine its national IP strategy and complete its IP system, with various activities under way, including advocacy on IPRs. Material and technical foundations were being strengthened to disseminate information on advanced science and technology and activate technology exchanges through the country's nationwide distribution network, down to the grass-roots level. The country's Sci-Tech Complex was providing multifunctional information services to promote learning for all. To date, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had ratified or acceded to 18 treaties, conventions and agreements administered by WIPO. In 2020, it had submitted instruments of accession to the Nairobi Treaty on the Protection of the Olympic Symbol and the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT), demonstrating the country's unwavering commitment to international activities for IP protection.

41. The Delegation of Ecuador expressed solidarity with Member States in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and its confidence that the future IP system would facilitate access to health care and health technologies and help relaunch trade and the economy after the pandemic. Ecuador was aware of the difficulties of negotiating an agenda under the current circumstances but trusted the process would be effective, transparent and inclusive. As a highly diverse country, Ecuador was particularly interested in advancing the agenda of the IGC for the protection of GRs and TK. The Delegation called for concrete decisions to be taken at the IGC's next meeting, should conditions permit negotiations at that time, for submission to the General Assembly. Concerning copyright and related rights, the Delegation hoped to see progress in discussing an international regulation covering the requirements of libraries, archives, educational institutions and persons with disabilities. Ecuador considered the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) central to achieving the SDGs and called for comprehensive work to develop tools suitable for replication and use in implementing the SDGs.

42. The Delegation of Egypt commended the Chair for his efforts over the preceding months to ensure the holding of the Assemblies despite exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation endorsed the statements of the regional and political groups to which it belonged, and commended the role of WIPO in strengthening the IP system, encouraging innovation and creativity, and building the capacities of countries to achieve SDGs.



The Delegation looked forward to expanding WIPO activities in the field of technical support and capacity building, especially in developing countries, to include all objectives. Achieving progress in the ambitious international instruments, which were pending on WIPO agenda, was also critical to advancing the international IP system. The Delegation expressed appreciation for the interest that the Organization was showing to modern technology and AI, stressing the importance of the role played by WIPO in providing support in this area, especially to developing countries. The challenges posed by COVID-19 had demonstrated the importance of maximizing the role of IP in response to the pandemic, especially with regard to the role of WIPO in supporting health research and innovation, and promoting the application of compulsory licensing system for patents related to public health and access to medicine. The role of WIPO was equally important in the coming period to ensure availability of the anti-virus vaccine to all on an equal basis and without any discrimination. The Delegation stressed that Egypt had spared no effort in harnessing all its potential to deal with the pandemic, and had put the citizen's interest and health as a top priority by achieving a balance between health considerations and maintaining economic performance. In that regard, a sum of 100 billion Egyptian pounds was earmarked to overcome the crisis, in addition to providing researchers with all necessary and appropriate means to conduct research, and launching initiatives to support and encourage innovations in order to confront the virus. The activities also included providing sterilized material, manufacturing disinfectants and facemasks according to WHO standards, as well as organizing awareness campaigns and seminars on best practices for combatting the pandemic. A living-with-the-pandemic plan had also been developed in order to gradually return to normal life, while fully adhering to precautionary measures. Special interest was paid by the country to developing and implementing an e-learning system in order to safeguard the health of schoolchildren and university students and reduce the virus spread. Egypt had also assisted many countries during the crisis by providing them with medical equipment, and attended many international events on addressing the pandemic impacts, as a way to effect and coordinate international efforts. In parallel, Egypt continued to promote IP and scientific research in a way to achieve comprehensive development under the Egypt Vision 2030. Related activities included the launch of the National Project on Education Development, the establishment of the Knowledge and Innovation Banks, the issuance of the Law on Science, Technology and Innovation Incentives, the creation of the Innovators Care Fund for an innovation-enabled environment. Moreover, 23 Egyptian universities joined a list of the 767 global universities ranked in terms of their impact in achieving SDGs in 2020, according to the British Times ranking. That result was consistent with the quantitative and qualitative upsurge in scientific research in the country. Egypt had also achieved a remarkable progress in terms of education quality according to United States of America news ranking, progressing by nine positions to be ranked 42 in 2020, after being ranked 51 out of 80 States in the world in 2019. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Daren Tang on his election to the post of Director General of WIPO, and reaffirmed its readiness to provide him with the necessary support to implement his mandate in a manner that fulfilled the goals of the Organization. Mr. Tang was taking office when the world was facing an exceptional challenge that affected all aspects of life, which required mutual support more than ever in order to overcome that crisis. The Delegation also praised Mr. François Rivasseau, the Permanent Representative of France, for his work in chairing the Coordination Committee, as well as in chairing the General Assembly on March 4, 2020, when elections to the post of Director General were held. The Delegation also thanked Mr. Francis Gurry for managing and leading WIPO in a sound manner over the past years. The Delegation said that his work had contributed to supporting the Organization's role within the UN system, enriching the IP system, enhancing the use of IP tools in various fields and building capacities of Member States, especially developing and LDCs, in the field of IP, as well as achieving financial stability for the Organization. The Delegation wished him all success in his future endeavors.

43. The Delegation of El Salvador aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. During the global health crisis, IP had brought important tools to the business sector. El Salvador was in the initial phases of its economic recovery plan, and

one of its priorities was to support micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), where WIPO cooperation and support was crucial. El Salvador had carried out strategic initiatives to promote innovation and technology transfer, with IP playing a central role. It was very important for El Salvador to work more closely with WIPO and other Member States and help strengthen the IP system and the Organization itself. In the current context especially, El Salvador considered coordinated efforts to promote IP and innovation essential to economic health and development in line with the SDGs. El Salvador looked forward to continuing its excellent relations and close cooperation with WIPO under the new leadership, particularly in the area of normative work based on lessons learned from the pandemic.

44. The Delegation of Ethiopia said that WIPO's ability to keep its financial position, PCT filings and trademark registrations largely unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic reflected its effectiveness in overcoming challenges. The Delegation welcomed the proposal to convene an extraordinary session of the Assemblies in the first half of 2021 to cover any pending agenda items. In the light of the fact that, six years after the independent review of the implementation of the DA Recommendations, no strategies or modalities had yet been agreed, Member States should exercise flexibility in the CDIP to conclude discussions in that regard. In addition, the IGC must finalize its negotiations and recommend to the Assemblies the convening of a diplomatic conference, since legally binding instruments were vital to the protection of GRs, TK and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) in a fair and balanced global IP system. Ethiopia, as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, highly valued the work and support of WIPO. It had set out economic reforms with a view to enhancing its competitiveness. To be a part of global value chains, it needed a well-developed IP system that drove innovation and creativity and increased productivity. Through WIPO's timely support, Ethiopia had been able to draft its national IP policy and strategy, which was now in its final stage; its implementation would strengthen the protection of IPRs. In addition, the national IP academy that was being set up would be operational in 2021. The Delegation welcomed, in particular, the support of WIPO experts in the area of IP and enforcement, awareness-enhancing workshops and training on the collective management of copyright and developing IP infrastructure, and especially in the context of the country's draft law on TK, an area of great importance to Ethiopia. In addition, the business automation system deployed by WIPO's IP Office Business Solutions Division the previous year had enabled Ethiopia's IP office to minimize inconveniences posed by COVID-19. As part of Ethiopia's reform measures to ensure sustainable growth and economic development, scaled up efforts were needed to bolster the country's IP system, taking into account its specific needs. WIPO support was needed to help enhance knowledge about IP, innovation and collaboration, in particular, in relation to the country's rich culture and geographically specific products. Lastly, Ethiopia had recently ratified the Marrakesh Treaty and its document of ratification would be deposited to WIPO in the coming week. It also planned to finalize the ratification process of other WIPO-administered treaties.

45. The Delegation of Finland, aligning itself with the statements made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states, expressed appreciation for WIPO's engagement to continue its valuable work virtually and hoped that virtual meetings would continue to be used alongside physical meetings in the future. The Delegation saw huge challenges for the IP system in the new digital environment and data economy – including the impact of AI – necessitating continuous contact between experts and flexible new working methods. In order for rightholders and society to continue benefitting from an efficient IP framework, and to facilitate the creation of a new national IPRs strategy in Finland, gradual digitalization of the IP system would be crucial. The development of IP infrastructure would help stakeholders see the value of better identifying IP assets and interoperable standards for data exchange in the digital environment. The Delegation expressed its sincere condolences for the passing of Carole Croella, of WIPO's Copyright and Creative Industries Sector.

46. The Delegation of France aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states. France considered WIPO a shining example of exactly the kind of robust, modern and efficient multilateralism required in the current climate. The Organization served as a hub for all States to discuss innovation in a collaborative, constructive and respectful spirit. The systematic effort made by WIPO to structure debates and outline solutions in the field of AI was particularly representative of the new directions in which the Organization was moving. In the current circumstances, it was crucial to continue finding new ways of interacting and combining efforts, as results were both required and expected. Similarly, internal and external assessments and recommendations could not be disregarded. The proper functioning and administration of all IP protection systems was vital for both the users of those systems and the staff of international organizations. France was committed to promoting multilingualism and supported the request for the revision of the Policy on Languages at WIPO, as agreed during the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the PBC. It would support the new leadership in ensuring that the Organization continued to work efficiently and effectively.

47. The Delegation of Gabon aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. It commended WIPO for holding the 2020 Assemblies against the challenging backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since the agenda for the Assembly meetings had been pared back, Gabon supported calls to convene an extraordinary session in the first quarter of 2021 to allow substantive issues to be discussed. The growing interdependence of the Member States in the context of the pandemic highlighted the vital importance of implementing the DA recommendations and achieving the SDGs. There was good reason to examine global governance models, particularly as regards access to medicines and health products. The current health crisis had demonstrated the urgency of finding effective solutions, including through the implementation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement) and the transfer of technology. The Industrial Property Office would be relocating to its new headquarters soon, which should allow it to better organize its work. In that connection, Gabon would be grateful for WIPO technical assistance in establishing a TISC.

48. The Delegation of the Gambia aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. It commended the outgoing Director General, Francis Gurry, for his loyal service and steadfast management of WIPO and for his support in developing the IP system of the Gambia. It was convinced that the Organization would go from strength to strength under the clear and decisive leadership of the Director General-Elect, Daren Tang, and hoped that the IP system of the Gambia would continue to be bolstered under the new regime.

49. The Delegation of Georgia thanked the Secretariat for the efforts made to hold the Assemblies despite the current circumstances. It wished to take the opportunity to highlight the efficient work of the TDC. Georgia had greatly benefited from cooperation activities carried out by the Department and looked forward to continuing that fruitful collaboration. The Delegation also expressed its sincere gratitude to the WIPO Academy for its cooperation with Georgia over the years, and noted its anticipation of further continuous support for IP educational activities. The Delegation hoped for a constructive session of the Assemblies.

50. The Delegation of Germany aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B and by the Delegation on behalf of the European Union and its member states. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, a strong and balanced IP system was crucial for developing vaccines and medicines, and for global economic recovery. The Delegation welcomed the efficient and effective international cooperation facilitated by WIPO initiatives, including the more than 150 research collaborations within WIPO Re:Search in the fight against neglected tropical diseases, malaria and tuberculosis. The Delegation encouraged WIPO to consider how it could effectively contribute to the global economic

recovery and the management of the global health crisis, and invited WIPO to engage closely with the WHO and the WTO to ensure that IP issues were appropriately and competently included in relevant discussions. AI held all the promises and challenges of a disruptive technology. In that context, the IP system was a decisive driver for innovation and creativity. The Delegation welcomed WIPO's engagement with AI, as it could play a key role as an international observatory and as a global forum for the exchange of ideas and the coordination of efforts. It was positive that WIPO would continue to address relevant issues by organizing a third session of the Conversation on AI and IP. The Government of Germany considered IPRs an integral part of the legal, economic and cultural framework governing enterprises and society. WIPO, as the leading body in that area, must demonstrate that IP was an instrument for meeting current global challenges, including global health, climate change and sustainable development. The Delegation encouraged WIPO to contribute actively to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and identify areas for its own possible input, in close cooperation with other Geneva-based institutions. The Government of Germany supported a robust and coherent international IP framework that was fit for purpose, struck a balance between different interests and concerns, encouraged innovation, and fostered the development and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and conditions. Stakeholders, including IP offices, would benefit from a simpler and more harmonized international framework, including substantive provisions on copyright law, patent law and trademark law. Work on normative issues should be resumed following the creation of a framework for productive work, which would require all logistical and technical questions to be clarified, including those concerning procedural rules for virtual decision-making. As deliberations within the SCCR had demonstrated, the international harmonization of legal concepts was a complex task, and the Delegation looked forward to resuming the work of the SCCR once conditions allowed for it, with respect for the traditional consensus on the allocation of time for agenda items within the SCCR. If Member States worked together in a spirit of consensus and with the firm aim of striking a fair balance between all interests involved, WIPO could continue to provide a framework within which positive results could be achieved. The Delegation was committed to improving the protection of broadcasting organizations by reaching a consensus on an international treaty. In order for the treaty to be sustainable and successful, its scope of application should reflect the latest technical developments. The Delegation welcomed the discussion on further technologies, in particular on deferred transmissions online, and would continue to actively support the efforts of the SCCR in order to advance text-based work on an international treaty for the protection of broadcasting organizations. The Delegation was interested in sharing national experiences regarding exceptions and limitations for certain organizations and purposes, as well as for people with disabilities other than print disabilities. Although the Delegation firmly believed that there was no need for a legally binding international instrument in that area, it was receptive to other Member States' legal concepts. It was also interested in sharing views on further issues such as the resale right and challenges for copyright in the digital environment. Users of patent law were calling for the further development and improvement of the system and WIPO, in particular the SCP, should heed that call. The Delegation was eager to continue work on issues of patent quality, including opposition systems, and the confidentiality of communications between clients and their patent advisors. Further work in that area was beneficial to all countries, as it would enhance the credibility, reliability and stability of the international IP system. The Delegation awaited with interest the report on the sharing session on the use of AI for the examination of patent applications, and welcomed the inclusion in the future work program for the 32<sup>nd</sup> SCP session of further sharing sessions on AI and issues related to the patentability of inventions. AI technology raised numerous important legal questions regarding patent protection for AI-related inventions. Given the opportunities and challenges it presented to the administration of the patent system, it was useful to share experiences and information in the SCP. Germany looked forward to discussions on the review of existing research on patents and access to medical products and health technologies as far as substantive issues of patents and health were concerned. The latest figures on application numbers under the PCT showed the core

importance of the PCT System for users worldwide. The Delegation was delighted to note a steady increase the annual number of applications filed in Germany, as well as an increase of seven per cent in the number of PCT applications from abroad that had entered the national phase at the German Patent and Trade Mark Office (DPMA) in 2019. The DPMA had processed 7,507 international applications in the national phase in 2019, of which over 85 per cent were filed by applicants outside Germany. The Delegation appreciated the numerous improvements made to the PCT System through changes to its legal framework, and looked forward to the 2020 PCT Working Group. It was unfortunate that Member States had again been unable to agree to convene a diplomatic conference for the adoption of a DLT, and that the facilitator's proposal for solving the issue of disclosure requirement had been rejected. Germany, like other European Union member states, remained convinced that such a requirement was not relevant to industrial designs and that its inclusion in the Treaty would contradict the aim of simplifying and harmonizing design registration procedures. However, Germany would consider any reasonable and constructive proposals that may be raised in the future. The accession of the European Union to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement would enable its entry into force for all contracting parties, as the European Union was the key fifth member of the international registration system. The protection of geographical indications provided an instrument to protect regional TK for both agricultural and non-agricultural products. The Delegation noted the broad consensus among Member States to continue work in the WIPO IGC. It would continue to participate in processes to achieve consensus on a *sui generis* instrument that took into account the interests of holders of TK, GRs and folklore, and that did not harm the functioning of the international IP system. Germany supported the continued implementation of the 45 recommendations of the WIPO DA in a balanced and consensus-driven manner. The results of the most recent session of the CDIP had constituted considerable progress in a number of areas. The DPMA had continued its successful cooperation with WIPO, other IP-related organizations and national IP offices, despite the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. In November 2019, the DPMA and WIPO had held two successful seminars. The first seminar had concerned WIPO services, focusing on the PCT procedure, and had been aimed primarily at patent applicants, patent law firms and company representatives. The second seminar had been held as in-house training for patent examiners, patent administration and other DPMA staff on the PCT procedure and the search possibilities of the WIPO databases. In late 2019, the DPMA had held high-level bilateral meetings to discuss IP topics with their counterparts at the IP offices of Belarus and the Russian Federation. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the international cooperation of the DPMA with WIPO and national and regional IP offices had been severely restricted. High-level meetings, major DPMA events and international meetings at the working level had been cancelled, as had annual patent examiner exchanges with the national IP offices of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom. The DPMA increasingly relied on virtual conferences to continue dialog with its partner offices, and its successful series of seminars on WIPO services and initiatives would continue in a virtual format.

51. The Delegation of Ghana aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group and by the Delegation of Azerbaijan on behalf of the NAM. In the past month, the President of Ghana had officially opened the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, in Accra, which sought to boost intra-African trade and competitiveness. IPRs played a key role in that regard. Ghana appreciated the ongoing efforts of WIPO to promote the use and protection of IP globally as a tool for development and wealth creation. The COVID-19 pandemic had laid bare the challenges facing developing countries such as Ghana and highlighted the need to digitalize national IP offices and enhance innovation in order to drive economic growth. Lastly, Ghana supported calls for WIPO to expand its technical support to those countries which needed it.

52. The Delegation of Greece associated itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states. It praised WIPO's positive financial

results and prudent management, welcoming the continuous increase in PCT and Madrid System filings. The Delegation called for continuing emphasis on the delivery of high quality services to users to ensure an effective IPRs system. It said the digital transformation of filing procedures and increased access to tools would make the IP system more accessible and responsive to user needs, generating intangible IP assets and contributing to economic growth and other social benefits. Greece had recently modernized its IP system through a new law on trademarks (L.4679/20-3-2020), in line with Directive (EU) 2015/2436 and Enforcement Directive 2004/48. The law would make the country's trademark protection system faster, more operational and more effective. A united and powerful market control mechanism had been established by Law 4712/29-7-2020 to protect the internal market by boosting competitiveness and entrepreneurship, safeguarding consumers, enhancing national security, protecting IP and increasing public and business revenues. A clear definition of counterfeit goods had also been introduced. Provisions had been made for strict fines (up to 100,000 euros) for trade in such goods, as well as their immediate confiscation and destruction. Illicit trade in counterfeit goods would thus be considerably restricted. With financial support from the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), the Greek Trademark Office had completed the digitalization of its trademarks registry, to be made available electronically by the end of 2020. Since the beginning of 2020, though closed to the public for three months, the Greek Trademark Office had received almost 4,000 national trademark applications. E-filing tools previously provided by EUIPO had been very effective under the current unexpected circumstances. Concerning patents and industrial designs, the Hellenic Industrial Property Organization (HIPO) had continued to improve IT infrastructure and access to a fully electronic filing system. Thanks to digitization of the filing procedure, filings had not been disrupted during the pandemic lockdown. In fact, the number of patent filings had increased by more than 30 per cent during the first semester of 2020, the lockdown notwithstanding. Paperless communication was also being encouraged. All PCT applications submitted to the HIPO were being transmitted to the International Bureau by electronic means only, *via* e-PCT. With its certification from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), OBI remained committed to providing quality services to users. Access to the IP system had been improved by expanding the network of regional patent libraries offered through universities and chambers of commerce in seven Greek cities, establishing links with local communities and businesses. HIPO had provided targeted training in IPR enforcement to law enforcement officials and produced a video to raise public awareness about the consequences of purchasing counterfeit products. A project recently launched in collaboration with EUIPO and the municipality of Thessalonica would prevent the sale of counterfeit goods and demonstrate to citizens and local authorities the importance of buying original products. A mobile application had also been developed for reporting illicit trade activities to municipal police in real time. In relation to copyright and related rights, the Hellenic Copyright Organization (HCO), under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, had taken a number of important initiatives. A significant amendment to the Greek Copyright Act regarding digital piracy had strengthened the role and competence of the Committee for the Notification of Copyright and Related Rights Infringements on the Internet. The amendment empowered the Committee to order the dynamic blocking of access to copyright-infringing material where it found that its prior decisions had been circumvented. The purpose of the amendment was to combat piracy in the digital environment through coordination with the European Union and larger international community. The HCO had also conducted awareness-raising initiatives, including the creation of a national online portal to promote legal creative content and an EU-funded program to educate young people and secondary school teachers in Greece and Cyprus about copyright.

53. The Delegation of Guatemala aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. Guatemala recognized that IP played an important role in national economies around the world and as a major factor in strengthening public policy management. The Delegation highlighted WIPO's role as a specialized agency and as a partner in creating and implementing national IP system strategies. It expressed interest in seeing the recommendations of the DA inclusively implemented in WIPO's various projects and

activities. The Delegation urged Member States to continue debating constructively as key to substantial progress in their work.

54. The Delegation of the Holy See said it looked forward to working with Mr. Tang to advance a balanced and effective international IP system. The Delegation recalled that, in his address to healthcare workers from the Lombardy region, on June 20, 2020, Pope Francis had praised the “visible signs of humanity” being displayed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, countries had made unprecedented investments in collaborative, not-for-profit research and development, demonstrating the benefits of collaboration – lives saved and improved health for billions of people – when responding to a shared global health threat. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO had shown its readiness to face challenges through PATENTSCOPE, which had over 80 million technology disclosures and a specially developed COVID-19 search and retrieval facility, enhancing access to technological information disclosed in published patents for inventions to detect, prevent and treat COVID-19. The Delegation commended WIPO for its immediate action, among other measures, to establish 900 TISCs worldwide, providing access to patent and scientific data as well as publications and ancillary facilities for researchers in least developed, developing and transitioning economies. The Delegation recognized the importance of the IP protection system and of inventive activity for the common good, renewing its call for legislation and plans to ensure that patents and trade measures did not prevent access to essential treatments, diagnostics, medicines, medical supplies and devices. At his General Audience on August 18, 2020, Pope Francis had stressed that the vaccine should not become the property of the richest or of a single nation. The COVID-19 pandemic should not overshadow the ecological crisis and, as stated in Article 10 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, innovation was central to tackling global warming. The innovation, transfer and dissemination of climate-friendly technology and IPRs fostered by the IP system helped to incentivize the development of new solutions which, through licensing agreements or joint ventures, could help to spread the fruits of innovation to areas most in need. Five years earlier, the international community had agreed on the UN SDGs, more than half of which required green technology solutions. As Pope Francis had stated at his Audience on September 12, 2020, generic commitments were not enough; a willingness to tackle the root causes of climate change was still needed.

55. The Delegation of Honduras expressed solidarity with all countries as they struggled to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. WIPO’s staff members had carried out exceptional efforts to adapt to the crisis and resume activities. Honduras thanked Mr. Francis Gurry for his support over the years and the progress made in WIPO’s normative agenda under his leadership. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment as Director General, reiterating its commitment to continued collaboration with WIPO.

56. The Delegation of Hungary supported limiting the work of the 2020 Assemblies to indispensable administrative issues, emphasized its commitment to supporting the Assemblies in making progress on global IP policy matters and expressed its willingness to further the work of the Assemblies.

57. The Delegation of Iceland noted with appreciation the progress made under the strong and able leadership of the outgoing Director General, Francis Gurry, particularly the conclusion of the Beijing Treaty and the Marrakesh Treaty. It was grateful for the important steps taken by WIPO in recent years to modernize information-sharing and communication with national IP offices and was convinced that the Organization would continue to grow under the guidance of the Director General-Elect Daren Tang.

58. The Delegation of India commended WIPO for having continued to run its IPR services efficiently in spite of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. India had taken significant steps to promote innovation and create a dynamic, vibrant and balanced IP system with particular focus on encouraging startups. It had intensified its collaboration with WIPO, having acceded to five

IPR treaties in the past two years, and currently ranked 33 places higher in the GII than in 2015. The Delegation supported the proposal to hold extraordinary Assemblies in early 2021 to discuss substantive issues. It urged Member States to overcome the impasse related to the opening of WIPO External Offices.

59. The Delegation of Indonesia said that, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its IP services remained open and the number of IP registrations had increased, thanks to the availability of online registration for copyright, patent, trademark and industrial design applications. Indonesia welcomed the continued efforts of WIPO and Member States to mainstream development into the Organization's work. While it recognized the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it looked forward to the resumption of the Organization's normative work, to which it continued to lend its full support, particularly in connection with the IGC, the protection of country names and a WIPO treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations. It also hoped that the Assemblies could soon reach a decision on holding a diplomatic conference for the adoption of a DLT.

60. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) said that the world faced increasing and overlapping challenges, which now included the appalling impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was also causing the deepest global economic crisis in decades. The only way to overcome that challenge was through genuine human solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility by the international community. While there was increasing hope and demand for the development of coronavirus treatments and vaccines, there were also increasing concerns regarding potential IP barriers to access to those products. In accordance with its global mandate, WIPO had to play a key role in that regard, by initiating an inclusive discussion on IP and public health in the context of the pandemic. It was now, more than ever, necessary to empower developing countries to better use the policy measures that were available in national and international IP systems in order to manage and mitigate emergencies. That should be seen as a priority for the Organization in the coming months. As the world continued to deal with the pandemic, the digital divide had added a new dimension of vulnerability to the development divide. In that respect, technological know-how was a main driver for sustained economic development. Promoting and facilitating the transfer of technology had long been an irreplaceable element of the policies to bridge the technology gap. Accordingly, WIPO should provide support for improving domestic capacities and stimulate local innovation as well as international efforts to develop a supportive environment for technology transfer.

61. The Delegation of Israel aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Israeli economy was largely based on innovation in different fields and sectors, including the high tech industry. Israel therefore acknowledged the importance of IP to a well-functioning innovation ecosystem that supported investors, SMEs, start-ups, universities and other actors in turning ideas into assets. WIPO played a pivotal international role in that regard and Israel looked forward to working closely with the incoming Director General to further promote innovation and economic growth via the IP system. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected the lives and livelihoods of the global population, and the Delegation appreciated the Organization's role in ensuring the continuity of its services, in particular the registration system, during such challenging times, while also protecting WIPO staff. Israel was an active user of WIPO's international registration system, with the biggest number of PCT applications per capita globally and one of the highest numbers of applications made by women. In 2019, approximately 85 per cent of the national phase applications received by the Israeli IP Office had come from the PCT System. The Delegation was therefore grateful for WIPO's commitment to constantly improving the registration system, including through the use of advanced technologies. It reiterated its commitment to participating in the Assemblies in a constructive and positive manner.

62. The Delegation of Italy aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states, and by the Delegation of the



United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. It expressed its appreciation of the WIPO Crisis Management Dashboard initiative and Italy's need for a focus area dedicated to the implications of AI for IP policy. It also welcomed the recent launch of the WIPO PROOF service and of the revised Intellectual Property for Business website. It likewise applauded WIPO's active engagement in continued promotion of the normative agenda and its recent successes in the field of international treaties. The Delegation confirmed its continued interest in and commitment to broader development of the global IP systems. In particular, it reaffirmed support for international protection and registration of geographical indications *via* the Lisbon System, highly valued for its strong potential benefits for all WIPO members across the spectrum of development, particularly for SMEs and rural producers. Accordingly, the Delegation welcomed the entry into force of the Geneva Act and called on WIPO to provide adequate support for the renewed Lisbon System. The Delegation expressed hope that WIPO would undertake focused promotional and technical assistance activities across regions, including by virtual means, to further spread accurate information about the updated Lisbon system and to fully harness the opportunities offered to the business sector of developed, developing, and least developed countries. Finally, the Delegation affirmed Italy's strong support for WIPO's promotion and development of a global, balanced, holistic and effective international IP system in line with the UN Agenda 2030 goals.

63. The Delegation of Jamaica aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. Outgoing Director General Mr. Francis Gurry was commended for his astute leadership and his efforts to address the needs of developing and least developed countries, particularly in fostering inclusive and sustainable growth and development through IP. His continuous support of the Secretariat, including for the hosting of two seminars in Jamaica in March 2020, prior to the closing of Jamaica's borders, had been appreciated. The Delegation expressed confidence that the new leadership would lead development of a balanced and effective international IP system that would enable and facilitate innovation and creativity benefiting all its Member States, as well as maintain WIPO's healthy and stable financial situation. It also commended the WIPO staff, including the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, for its continued cooperation and responsiveness to members despite the unprecedented global COVID-19 challenges to the essential security interests of all countries and especially to the most vulnerable and less robust health systems of developing and least developed countries. Indeed, to fight that pandemic, access to affordable medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and medical equipment was indispensable; likewise, the technologies to produce them should also be broadly available. However, patents on products or processes generally limited acquisition of pharmaceutical products at low prices or in sufficient quantities. WIPO treaties should thus continue to be interpreted and implemented in a way that supported WIPO members' right to protect public health and in particular to promote access to medicines for all. WIPO had a vital and ethical role to play in balancing people's health and the commercial aspects of IPRs. Despite the pandemic, the year had been very active for Jamaica and its Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), which had promoted and emphasized the importance of IP not as a legal construct but as a core aspect of development and trade. JIPO had worked with WIPO to implement modern and inclusive IP laws that would facilitate the economic growth and development of Jamaica as a small island state and consequently benefit Jamaica and every Jamaican. The Patent and Designs Act had been passed and Jamaica was preparing instruments of accession to several WIPO treaties. Jamaica's Protection of Geographical Indications Act and Regulations had also been amended to provide to all goods the higher level of protection afforded to wines and spirits, as well as to establish a Geographical Indications Advisory Committee. Work was also under way to accede to the Lisbon Agreement. Jamaica was far advanced on legislation for protection of new varieties of plants and had been working closely with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) Secretariat to ensure that the law would adequately protect breeders' rights in a way consistent with the UPOV Convention. Jamaica recognized the importance of WIPO's TISCs and their contribution to development and innovation in developing countries. Jamaica had thus decided to sign the Service Level Agreement resulting in the establishment, in Jamaica, of the first TISC

in the English-speaking Caribbean. Jamaica thanked WIPO for the support and training provided thus far, most recently through access to the Distance Learning Program facilitated by the WIPO Academy. WIPO had also supported Jamaica's push to increase national IP awareness, in particular Jamaica's commitment to green technologies promoting IP issues and policies. Accordingly, WIPO had shown its support for JIPO during its annual IP Week activities, held virtually on the theme "Innovate for a Green Future". WIPO's Global Issues Sector for "Building Respect for IP" had provided impactful assistance, and a draft enabling provision of a single law to protect TK, TCEs and GRs in Jamaica was under review. That draft had benefitted from ongoing deliberations and text-based negotiations at the IGC, whose work Jamaica recognized as important. Jamaica commended the proposal to hold an Expert Group seminar or meeting to continue the IGC work in a format cognizant of the current challenges of conducting negotiations. The Delegation additionally emphasized the importance of the normative agenda, the development and innovation agenda, and of the work of the WIPO Standing Committee on Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) relating to protection of country names. Jamaica looked forward to continuing work with the SCT but highlighted the challenges in conducting discussions in a hybrid format. It anticipated resumption of face-to-face meetings and dialogue after normalization of the pandemic situation. In closing, the Delegation reiterated Jamaica's full support for the mandate of the new Director General as well as Jamaica's unwavering commitment to WIPO's work.

64. The Delegation of Japan presented its expectations for WIPO and Japan's commitment. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an extremely severe situation for the global economy and for society, which had undergone massive transformations, including accelerated digital and IT transformations of lifestyles in society, notably in the form of teleworking. Innovation was the driver for new businesses and sustained economic growth; consequently, it was more important than ever to address those growing social challenges. An appropriate balance of initiatives that fostered innovation, and initiatives that disseminated innovation outcomes, were required to promote innovation. Japan expected WIPO, as the only specialized IP body at the UN, to help solve global issues by promoting further innovation to facilitate faster economic recovery. IP could also be used to help achieve the SDGs, including that on global warming. WIPO GREEN, WIPO's initiative to encourage development and diffusion of environmental technologies, had been established under the leadership of the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) and now had 115 partners. Japan's 23 partners, including the Japan Patent Office since February 2020, made up the largest number of WIPO GREEN participants. Japan would actively contribute towards achieving the SDGs through the diffusion of environmental technologies. Secondly, the IP system should be adopted to respond to the rapid advancement of ICT. Japan expected WIPO to promote innovation based on new emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and AI, to help build a prosperous future for the world. Accordingly, WIPO should lead international initiatives to ensure that IP systems responded appropriately to technological advancement and should more actively promote the international environment for the appropriate protection and exploitation of IP so that benefits from innovation could be enjoyed fairly by everyone in all Member States. For broad dissemination of new emerging technologies, appropriate protection would be vital. In recent years, Japan had led the development of an International Patent Classification (IPC) corresponding to IoT-related inventions and created as well as published case examples on AI-related inventions. The Delegation expressed its desire to share the knowledge and experiences Japan gained through these initiatives in the discussions on new emerging technologies led by WIPO. Thirdly, the Delegation underscored enhanced convenience for users – essential for WIPO mainly because most of its income comes from user fees. Communication between WIPO and its customers should be further expanded, as listening to customer opinions on WIPO initiatives would help make the international application system and the information provided by WIPO more user-friendly. The world's leading international applicants were Japanese; accordingly, the Delegation believed that, by receiving input from those users through the WIPO Japan office for example, Japan could significantly help improve WIPO's initiatives. Broadening the user base would also be necessary, so that people worldwide engaged in innovation and creation would

become WIPO users. Accordingly, contents and interfaces that were simple yet practical for SMEs, including for startups and individuals unfamiliar with the IP system, should be further enhanced. Fourthly, IP infrastructure should be strengthened through capacity building and development of IT systems. Japan anticipated a future increase in diversification of overseas operations by businesses in various countries, implying an increase in the diversity of countries and regions where companies acquired and exploited IP. The Delegation said that WIPO should be a bridge between developed and developing countries, while working with each Member State to promote more actively the international environment for the appropriate protection and exploitation of IP in order to ensure that the people in Member States could enjoy benefits from innovation fairly, and that Japan would continue support for WIPO initiatives through the voluntary contributions it had made for more than 30 years. The Delegation expressed its hope of achieving the inclusive, balanced, vibrant, and forward-looking Global IP Ecosystem mentioned in the acceptance speech of Mr. Daren Tang. Japan would continue to cooperate with WIPO, including through awareness-raising activities about IP at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, and would actively contribute to the development of the IP Ecosystem.

65. The Delegation of Jordan thanked the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for the long years serving the Organization and supporting the various WIPO initiatives to which everybody showed, undoubtedly, respect and appreciation. The Delegation welcomed the appointment of Mr. Daren Tang, who would take office shortly after the conclusion of that session, expressing hope to work with him in the development of the Organization and its programs. Such programs had proven to be critical for multilateral work to face future challenges. The Delegation was sure that Mr. Tang's great capabilities, high qualifications and insightful outlook would enable him to reinforce this solid ground, and assured him of all its support in order to achieve that purpose. The Delegation said that the session was taking place in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that the world was currently facing. Therefore, efforts to control the pandemic required a maximum of international multilateral action, close cooperation and mutual support. In that regard, the Delegation emphasized that WIPO had an important role to play in finding solutions for pandemic emerging challenges by using AI applications, including the provision of a safe vaccine to everyone on an equal basis. The Delegation expressed its solidarity with the families of all victims of the pandemic, and in particular the families of WIPO staff. The Delegation highlighted the utmost importance to continue work on issues related to providing advanced technical support to Member States, providing technical cooperation in building institutional capacities. Of equal importance was the strengthening of resources to support creativity and innovation and the implementation of the DA recommendations and the knowledge-based economy, as a basis of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In conclusion, the Delegation stressed the importance of continuing to develop the work of WIPO through consensus and with due regard to the basic principles governing the IP system in order to better respond to the needs of the twenty-first century and to benefit more from the experience the Organization had accumulated in that field.

66. The Delegation of Kenya aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation expressed its appreciation of WIPO's support over the years in the areas of capacity building, information infrastructure and systems, and collaborations in IP policies and innovations. It looked forward to increased collaboration in areas of vital importance to the economy and would continue to work with WIPO in supporting and promoting the leveraging of IP as a tool for socioeconomic development. WIPO had made significant achievements since its establishment as a specialized agency of the UN but had experienced challenges and shortcomings that required a new strategic approach and support from all Members States. Several issues should be fast-tracked urgently: first, the WIPO DA should be streamlined to enable countries to accrue the benefits of innovation and bridge the technological gap; second, issues in TK, TCEs and GRs had not been settled, and the relevant committees should conclude their work; and, third, the DLT and the convening of a diplomatic conference should be finalized so as to unlock the potential of this important IP right for Member States.

67. The Delegation of Kyrgyzstan expressed its condolences to all countries on the losses and human casualties incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation paid tribute to all the medical workers who were desperately trying to stop the virus for the sake of humankind. It trusted that, despite the rising second wave of the virus, all the participants of the current session of the Assemblies were in good health, and full of vitality and energy. The Delegation expressed its readiness to contribute to the work of future meetings. At the same time, the Delegation called upon all WIPO Member States to show flexibility and solidarity. The Delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of the Russian Federation on behalf of the CACEEC Group. The Delegation noted that it was with deep regret that it had accepted the current format for holding the meetings of the Assemblies. However, it understood that online meetings were being held as an exceptional measure owing to the current epidemiological situation. The Delegation expressed its gratitude to the Chair of the General Assembly and his deputies for their impeccable work in organizing the elections for the Director General of WIPO. It also thanked the Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee, Ambassador François Rivasseau, under whose direction the process of nominating a candidate for the position of Director General had been successfully accomplished. In its opinion, that was a historic moment that would be remembered because of its extraordinary nature. The Delegation acknowledged the stellar performance of Mr. Francis Gurry and WIPO staff in ensuring the continuity of the operations of all IP services and information resources. Moreover, WIPO had been able to develop new software products aimed at promoting innovation, and had been engaging in outreach activities among Member States with regard to the services offered by the Organization, as well as making use of IPRs. Under Mr. Gurry's leadership, the Organization had been able to reach important milestones and achieve growing budget surpluses, creating an opportunity to invest in infrastructure projects, such as AI and digital transformation. The Delegation noted that Mr. Gurry was being highly commended for his efforts, and those commendations were well deserved. The Delegation took the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Daren Tang once again on his appointment to a position of such great responsibility. It assured Mr. Tang of its full support for his efforts to realize the ideas and priorities he had highlighted during the election campaign. The Delegation wished for him to be able to accomplish his most ambitious professional goals, achieve the most positive results possible in his work and stay in good health. According to the Delegation, because the IP Office of Kyrgyzstan was responsible not only for the field of IP, but also for developing innovation, it shared Mr. Tang's vision for the creation of an effective international IP system that would promote and contribute to the development of innovation. The Office sincerely hoped that the skillful leadership of Mr. Daren Tang would create opportunities to implement new projects aimed at developing innovation and digital services, as well as to strengthen the potential of WIPO Member States in the field of human resources. The Delegation pointed to the trend of many IP Offices becoming involved in various ways in efforts to promote innovation in their respective countries. IP offices doubtlessly had an important role to play in that context. According to the Delegation, if WIPO were able to provide responsible and skillful leadership, as well as to initiate effective projects, Member States would succeed in promoting and using innovation on acceptable terms. For instance, in 2020, WIPO had assisted the IP Office of Kyrgyzstan in its efforts to establish a national center of innovation, which was the first infrastructure project of its kind implemented with Government involvement. As part of that project, the Office was creating an environment where the innovators would enjoy their creative endeavors, be aware of their mission for the common good of society and, last but not least, work with passion. Regrettably, for reasons known to everyone, a number of planned joint activities with WIPO had never taken place. However, the new format of cooperation was becoming ever more popular. For example, in 2020, more than 10 events on IP and innovation development had taken place using online platforms. In the context of the Assemblies, the position of the Office remained the same: it supported the development of a balanced, effective and universally acceptable global IP architecture. In 2021, the Office would also concentrate on promoting innovation and creating relevant infrastructure in the field. It was for that reason that the Office attached great importance to developing an innovation ecosystem in the country. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its continued

assistance in developing not just the national IP system, but also the country's innovation ecosystem. The impeccable work of the TDC remained beyond reproach. Owing to the efforts of that Department, WIPO projects and programs in the region were being implemented and IP awareness in the country was on the rise. In conclusion, the Delegation called upon the newly elected Director General of WIPO to keep the balance between the principles of fair geographical representation and gender equality, as well as achievements in building the global IP architecture, when nominating candidates to the WIPO SMT.

68. The Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed its appreciation for the comprehensive report of Director General Francis Gurry and the Secretariat on WIPO's accomplishments over the previous year. It remained ready to work with WIPO to advance its work in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had affected the economy of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and had forced the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) to cancel the IP Fair, the IP Day celebration for 2020 and, above all, the visit to that event by Director General Francis Gurry, whose invitation to visit following alleviation of the pandemic was reaffirmed. The pandemic had also affected hardcopy application filing. Hence, efforts were currently focused on establishing an electronic filing system. Support from the WIPO Singapore Office for that project had helped accelerate preparation work, and launch of the system was anticipated for late 2020. Public awareness and effective use of IP systems were being enhanced *via* the Enabling IP Environment (EIE) Project, to support increase in trade and business competitiveness, particularly for SMEs and MSMEs. The EIE Project enabled DIP to provide high-quality advisory services on brands and designs to its clients, with a view to increased IP utilization by SMEs. DIP had plans in the following two months to implement brand and design coaching as well as a support project for six SMEs on building branding strategy. DIP sought to utilize the IP system to enhance innovation and research; accordingly, it looked forward to a WIPO expert's mission to help it establish a national network of TISCs in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the near future. Accession to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement was planned by the end of 2020. Five additional GIs had been registered in 2020: Komean Tea, Paksong Tea, Huaphanh Silk, Luangphrabang Silk and Bolaven Coffee. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was continuing its efforts to accede to the Hague Agreement, the WCT and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), to help its local businesses explore markets abroad and to encourage foreign businesses to invest in product development by providing them easier access to IP of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

69. The Delegation of Latvia said that, while the current COVID-19 pandemic had drastically and indefinitely changed daily life, the crisis served as a reminder that Member States needed to make decisions enabling the IP system to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. In that context, the Organization's financial sustainability should remain of utmost importance. Together, Member States had the power to make a lasting impact; the Delegation hoped that they would take that approach during the Assemblies.

70. The Delegation of Lebanon supported the statements made on behalf of the regional groups to which it belonged. The Delegation extended its warmest congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment as Director General of WIPO, affirming Lebanon's confidence in Mr. Tang, and expressing its full support for him in the conduct of his duties. The Delegation was aware of the great challenges that the new Director General would be facing in terms of the widening digital divide, the intensification of competition in international trade and the decline of pluralism. The Delegation expressed its wish that the new Director General would accord the necessary importance to geographical diversity within the functions of the Secretariat. The Delegation also expressed to Mr. Francis Gurry its highest appreciation for his great achievements throughout his tenure at WIPO, which he had raised to the highest level. The Delegation conveyed to Mr. Gurry that the Lebanese authorities were grateful to him for the support he had always been keen to provide to Lebanon, and they wished him every success in his future endeavors. Since the end of 2019, the financial and economic crisis in Lebanon had intensified, and had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting human

losses and economic repercussions, which had contributed to the escalation of the challenges that had been facing the country for many years owing to the refugee crisis and the turmoil in the region. Moreover, the catastrophic explosion that had struck the port of Beirut on August 4 had deepened the scale of the tragedy. The Delegation affirmed, however, that despite the scale of the challenges, Lebanon was committed to building its national capacities in the field of IP, being aware of the positive impact on the economic advancement plan. The country was therefore looking forward to developing legislation and regulations aimed at protecting IP, as well as integrating IP concepts into the various related sectors. In that regard, the Delegation expressed the expectations of Lebanon that its technical cooperation with WIPO would be enhanced in the coming years to meet those ends. In conclusion, the Delegation commended WIPO's work under the current exceptional circumstances, urging the Organization to follow up on all the basic activities entrusted to it. WIPO was also called upon to maintain the transparent approach that had remained part of its deliberations, despite the exceptional circumstances that imposed on everyone drastic measures restricting the ability to move, communicate, travel and interact. The Delegation expressed hope that the Organization would, within its fields of competence, play a supportive role in international efforts to confront the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its economic and livelihood-related impacts on people around the world.

71. The Delegation of Lesotho aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation said that WIPO's technical assistance over the years had helped Lesotho strengthen its IP resources, provide relevant education and training, automate processes, improve copyright administration and draft a national IP policy and strategy. Prior to the 59<sup>th</sup> Series of Meetings of the Assemblies, Lesotho had requested technical assistance from WIPO in upgrading its IPAS, training staff in the processing of applications filed under the Madrid System, addressing the data capture backlog and conducting legislative reviews. Owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, these activities had not taken place. The Regional Bureau for Africa had organized a virtual meeting with Lesotho to explore how activities stalled in 2020 due to the pandemic, as well as efforts to develop its national IP strategy, could be carried out in 2021. Legislative assistance was of utmost importance for Lesotho since its laws had become outdated and did not comply with some of the treaties Lesotho wished to join. The country had been discussing the matter with various units within WIPO in the hope that the continuing pandemic would not jeopardize progress already made and allow work to resume and be completed on schedule. Lastly, Lesotho welcomed the initiative to merge WIPO's Regional Bureau for Africa with its Division for LDCs.

72. The Delegation of Liberia associated itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group and by the Delegation of Malawi on behalf of LDCs. Liberia had made great strides in implementing its national IP development plan and was committed to building key infrastructure and harnessing IPRs to spur economic growth. It had hosted the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Administrative Council and Council of Ministers of the African Regional Intellectual Property Office (ARIPO) in November 2019 and currently served as Chair of both of those bodies. It had also reformed the national collective management organization to ensure the swift collection and distribution of royalties for artists and producers of works emanating from Liberia. The support of WIPO in fostering the continued growth of that organization would be greatly appreciated. In lieu of WIPO technical support to train the judges and court officers of Liberia in the enforcement of IPRs, which had effectively been rendered impossible by ongoing health crises in the country, the Delegation said that it would be grateful for assistance in drafting a curriculum so that the Judicial Institute could deliver such training itself. In that connection, Liberia was grateful to the WIPO Academy, the ARIPO Academy and the Government of Japan for helping it to develop the necessary expertise on the ground to train its own judicial officers.

73. The Delegation of Libya supported the statements made by the groups to which it belonged. The Delegation expressed its condolences to the WIPO staff members who had lost

family members or loved ones because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation extended its sincere thanks to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for all the efforts he had made in leading the Organization, and welcomed the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, wishing him every success in his duties. Libya had joined WIPO in 1976, convinced that the protection of IPRs was the best way to ensure the economic, social and cultural development of societies, especially in the current era, which was witnessing unprecedented scientific advances. Such a situation had led to the emergence of new challenges, with multilateral cooperation required to confront their impacts. The Delegation said that everyone was aware of the situation in Libya and the exceptional circumstances the country was facing. Libya, however, was looking forward to cooperating closely with WIPO to protect and promote IPRs in all areas. The Delegation expressed hope that WIPO would provide Libya with assistance in using the online systems of the PCT, which Libya had joined in 2005, as well as assistance in training Libyan IP experts in the industrial, commercial and cultural fields. Moreover, the Delegation emphasized its keen interest in pursuing collaboration with the Regional Bureau for Arab Countries in the area of technical assistance. In conclusion, the Delegation extended its deep appreciation to all participating delegations and hoped the current session would have the best results and most successful outcomes possible.

74. The Delegation of Lithuania, aligning itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states and the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group, said that Lithuania had recently followed recommendations by WIPO experts in establishing a new IP framework, bringing together various authorities and public and private stakeholders to discuss and solve strategic IP issues. The Delegation was convinced that the current challenges facing the world also provided an opportunity to foster innovation.

75. The Delegation of Madagascar, lamenting the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, described how the Malagasy Industrial Property Office had made increased use of AI and new information technologies to implement its contingency plan, ensuring the continuity of industrial property administration through telework. The Delegation welcomed the partnership between Madagascar and WIPO in the field of paperless office technology and reiterated its commitment to digitalizing the documents of the Malagasy Industrial Property Office with essential support from the Global Infrastructure Sector, the Regional Bureau for Africa, and the Japan Funds-In-Trust (FIT). Recommending that priority be given to ongoing projects, such as the enhancement of product value through branding, the Delegation also looked forward to working with WIPO on future projects involving the use of AI in IP administration. The Malagasy Intellectual Property Office had been using IPAS software and wished to receive technical assistance to automate procedures, such as the translation of patent documents and trademark searches, in processing applications for industrial property titles.

76. The Delegation of Malaysia aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of Asia and the Pacific Group and by the Delegation of Viet Nam on behalf of ASEAN. The Delegation welcomed the global launch of that year's edition of the GII and was pleased with the outcome of the 2020 assessment indicating Malaysia's improvement in global innovation performance. The Delegation was committed to further fostering innovation by strengthening and advancing its national IP policies and system. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia in March 2020, most on-site operations and services had been suspended. By amending policies and procedures, and using innovation and digital technologies, it had been possible to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions and continue IP-related work. The Delegation thanked WIPO and other IP Offices for their continued efforts in organizing activities such as virtual workshops and seminars. It thought that many participants had benefited from those programs. The Delegation hoped similar programs would be organized in the future to promote awareness and provide opportunities to exchange views on various IP-related issues. While the Delegation noted the challenges COVID-19 posed on WIPO's normative agenda, it hoped that normative work would resume soon. The Delegation

reiterated the importance of greater equitable geographical representation in all WIPO committees.

77. The Delegation of Mali aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group and the Delegation of Malawi on behalf of LDCs. WIPO had long been providing invaluable technical assistance and capacity-building to Mali, helping it to effectively manage IP for its development. More recent cooperation between Mali and WIPO had led to such achievements as the drafting of the country's national IP development strategy and plan of action (2015–2019), the establishment of a number of new TISCs and the holding of various IP-related seminars. The Delegation had requested support from WIPO in implementing activities such as studies on the assessment and review of the national IP development strategy and the drafting of a national strategy to add value to local products through geographical indications or collective marks. It would also welcome assistance with the continuous capacity-building of stakeholders in the IP system through high-level training sessions, on the one hand for judicial officials on the effective application of IP law and mechanisms to tackle IP infringements, and, on the other, for TISC coordinators, Malian researchers, inventors, innovators and students on the use of scientific, technical and technological information in TISC databases. Lastly, the Delegation would appreciate the continuation of supporting measures arising from agreements initiated by or jointly with WIPO.

78. The Delegation of Mexico stated that the schemes and tools put in place by the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property, including an online trademark and patent platform and an intelligent trademark search engine, had enabled the continued handling of user requests during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Copyrights Institute (INDAUTOR) had likewise continued to register works and contracts and handle renewal requests relating to prior decisions and reservations of rights for exclusive use. The Delegation was grateful to the Secretariat for the productive dialogue and close collaboration maintained between WIPO and both the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property and INDAUTOR. Noting that women, SMEs and indigenous communities must benefit from IP if economies were to be developed and rebuilt without leaving anyone behind, the Delegation reiterated its commitment to work with WIPO and promote IP through a holistic approach that ensured a global impact.

79. The Delegation of Mongolia aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation reiterated its commitment to supporting the development of a fair and balanced global IP system, which was central to its efforts to improve the legal basis of the IP system and the protection of IPRs at the national level. In 2019, the Parliament of Mongolia had amended the Innovation Law with a view to renewing the terms of reference for innovation financing, and in January 2020, it had adopted the IP Law, which would become effective in December 2020. The purpose of the IP Law was to facilitate the commercialization of IP and protect IPRs by establishing a national committee on IP. Following the adoption of the IP Law, amendments to the Law on Trademarks and Geographical Indications, the Patent Law and the Law on Copyrights and Related Rights had been submitted to the Parliament for consideration. The amendments had been drafted in accordance with WIPO guidelines and legislative assistance received in 2017, with a view to aligning the laws with the relevant international legal instruments. In view of the ongoing global economic uncertainty and public health emergency, it was of paramount significance for WIPO to foster more efficient dialogue on mainstreaming IP throughout the economy by increasing the use of IP tools to strengthen businesses and socioeconomic development. The Government of Mongolia had commenced efforts to align its regular activities with the WIPO DA, and had been pleased to learn that WIPO was in good financial health. The Delegation expressed its sincere hopes that all normative agendas and committee work would be restarted at the earliest opportunity.

80. The Delegation of Montenegro commended WIPO on its achievements during the current pandemic, having introduced measures to ensure uninterrupted work. The country's Ministry of



Economy had cooperated regularly over the past year with the Department for Transition and Developed Countries (TDC) in developing the National Strategy of Intellectual Property 2021-2024, as agreed at the WIPO Assemblies in 2019 and in a subsequent meeting with Mr. Francis Gurry. The Ministry of Economy had formed a domestic working group with representatives of all the country's IPRs authorities and called on local and international experts. The strategy had been discussed and accepted during virtual meetings with the TDC, and the Ministry of Economy had conveyed input received from universities and other IPRs authorities to the local experts in charge of drafting a preliminary desk research report, for use in further developing the strategy. The working group had collected responses to a WIPO questionnaire from members of the country's IPRs community involved in developing the strategy. Owing to unexpected circumstances, the strategy would need to be developed differently, but the strategic document itself would not be affected. The WIPO seminars attended by Montenegrin representatives had included an International Symposium on Intellectual Property for the Belt and Road Countries, organized by WIPO and the National Intellectual Property Administration of the Republic of China (CNIPA), held in Zhuhai, China, on November 5 and 6, 2019; a Regional Seminar on Intellectual Property Strategy and Innovation Development, organized by WIPO and the Agency for Intellectual Property of the Republic of Uzbekistan (AIPU), held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on November 13 and 14, 2019; and a Sub-regional Seminar on Patent Information and Data Bases, organized by WIPO in cooperation with the State Intellectual Property Office of North Macedonia, held in Skopje on December 3, 2019. A representative of the Ministry of Economy had also participated in a seminar on Intellectual Property for the European Union in the World full of Challenges, held in Zagreb, Croatia, on February 19 and 20, 2020. The Delegation drew particular attention to a seminar on the WIPO Marrakesh Treaty hosted by the Ministry of Economy and WIPO in Podgorica, on December 17, 2019, which had attracted public and media attention. The Government of Montenegro had adopted legislation ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty, with support provided by WIPO on copyright and related rights, and the collective management of rights in that connection. IP staff from the Ministry of Economy had also participated in WIPO webinars. The Delegation hoped to continue its work with WIPO through the upcoming Work Plan 2021, to be agreed with the TDC, and remained committed to the CEBS Group.

81. The Delegation of Morocco stressed the importance of multilateralism, more indispensable than ever, in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. WIPO's significant achievements over the past decade, the Delegation said, should not obscure the need for renewed effort to meet the needs of Member States – particularly developing countries – and address a host of global challenges. Effective implementation of recommendations from the WIPO DA would, in particular, help developing countries benefit more from the international IP system. The profound changes affecting the world should lead WIPO to reconsider the overall framework for IP and analyze the legal, political and ethical impacts of AI on creativity and innovation. The Delegation called for particular attention to the Organization's normative agenda and completion of the lengthy negotiations on GRs, TK, TCEs, broadcast organizations against signal piracy and the diplomatic conference to adopt a DLT.

82. The Delegation of Myanmar said that stronger international cooperation and multilateralism were indispensable to help overcome the existing challenges that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to rebuild a better environment. In that regard, the WIPO DA could create a promising future for developing countries in their endeavors to solve the mounting challenges. Against that backdrop, the Government of Myanmar continued in its efforts to develop an effective, flourishing IP system in the country. It had established a central IP committee in March 2020 to successfully implement the IP laws that had been promulgated in 2019. In addition, a soft opening of the country's National Intellectual Property Office would take place on October 1, 2020, when that Office would start to receive trademark registrations via the WIPO FILE system. WIPO's assistance had been most appreciated in that context.

83. The Delegation of Namibia aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group and by the Delegation of Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM. The national IP policy, developed in cooperation with WIPO, had been launched in October 2019. The key strategies of that policy included developing a new copyright act, ratifying and acceding to IP-related international treaties, integrating IP into school curricula and academic programs, rolling out IP projects in the areas of culture and tourism, establishing TISCs and enforcing IPRs. Namibia was most grateful to WIPO for its support with IP development, although the implementation of certain projects continued to be hampered by the classification of Namibia as an upper-middle-income country. While the Delegation commended WIPO's efforts to establish gender parity at the executive level of the Organization, it wished to see greater gender parity among Member States representatives and the WIPO staff and governing bodies. The Delegation remained committed to promoting multilateralism in its cooperation with the Organization.

84. The Delegation of Nepal aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It noted that certain longstanding issues had yet to be resolved, notably global norm-setting in the areas of TK, TCEs and GRs, and the adoption of a treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations and a DTL. It encouraged Member States to amicably resolve disagreements over the opening of External Offices in line with the Guiding Principles regarding WIPO External Offices adopted at the 2015 General Assembly. Lastly, the Delegation asked WIPO to provide special support to developing countries, in particular LDCs, in the areas of technical assistance, innovation and capacity building to help them to build back better in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve the SDGs in a timely fashion.

85. The Delegation of Nigeria aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. It noted with appreciation the increased presence of WIPO in Africa generally and Nigeria specifically, as evidenced by the establishment of the WIPO Nigeria Office in Abuja in January 2020. It was also grateful for the assistance of the WIPO Regional Bureau for Africa in formulating a national IP policy and strategy and the support of the WIPO Academy in training Nigerian officials. Nigeria was developing initiatives domestically and regionally to support creativity and innovation and championing the use of IP as a tool for growth and development. It was also working with other members of the African Union, under the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, to ensure inclusiveness in the IP system. For instance, it had rolled out an IP awareness and education program, strengthened the administration and protection of IP and fostered greater synergy in the use and enforcement of the IP system, including the realignment of programs related to the protection of TK, GRs and folklore. In that regard, the Delegation remained committed to the normative work of WIPO.

86. The Delegation of Norway reaffirmed the importance it attached to improving the ability of Member States to monitor the economy and administration of WIPO and welcomed the ongoing efforts and cooperation to this end. The Delegation commended the International Bureau for its continued focus on securing the best available global services under the PCT as well as the Madrid and Hague Systems. From a user's perspective, it considered smooth system operations together with ongoing simplification and cost cutting as crucial to the continued and increased use of these global IP services. The Delegation was pleased to note the continuing progress being made by the working groups under these systems to improve regulations, guidelines and practices, confirming Norway's commitment to developing global services for the benefit of existing and future users. The Delegation looked forward to the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Design Law Treaty and expressed its ongoing support for work in the SCCR on a treaty to protect broadcasting organizations.

87. The Delegation of Oman expressed great appreciation and gratitude to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his great efforts and numerous achievements during the years of

his tenure, which had witnessed tremendous developments in the field of IP at the international, regional and national levels. His close cooperation and outstanding relations with Oman and its officials were highly appreciated. The Delegation welcomed the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, wishing him all the success, and looked forward to working with him in resuming work to build a world where IPRs are respected and protected from violation and infringement. The Delegation said that Oman presented a detailed statement explaining areas of cooperation with WIPO during the 60<sup>th</sup> extraordinary session of the General Assembly, which was held last May. The Delegation added that, due to time constraints, it would not be able to address all areas of cooperation, and therefore asked the Secretariat to combine the present statement with the previous one for inclusion in the meeting report. Before concluding, the Delegation expressed sincere thanks to the WIPO Secretariat for all the efforts deployed and for continuing work despite the current circumstances. Special thanks were extended to the Regional Bureau for Arab Countries, the WIPO Academy and the Traditional Knowledge Division, as well as the rest of WIPO departments, for their cooperation and for providing continuous technical support over the past years, which had led to the development and promotion of IP services and IP concept in Oman. The Delegation pointed out the great progress made by Oman in terms of cooperation activities with the Organization. That progress was reflected in the accession to many international IP agreements and the collaboration with WIPO on several projects, principally the National IP Strategy, the Technology Transfer and Innovation Project and the Women and Innovation Project. The Delegation highlighted that, for the latter project, Oman was among the first Arab participating countries. Mention was also made of the Omani customized issue of the General Course on IP (DL-101). In conclusion, The Delegation endorsed the statements made by the Delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group, and by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation also inquired on whether the Organization was planning to discuss the issue of IP and health, in light of its importance under the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing that WIPO could not omit to address this important topic for all Member States and for humanity as a whole.

88. The Delegation of Pakistan acknowledged the efforts made by the WIPO Secretariat to organize the present meeting. It was pleased to report that Pakistan had completed the internal formalities required to accede to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks and was in the process of submitting the instrument of ratification. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic impacts, WIPO's responsibility to guide the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enabled innovation and creativity for the benefit of all was increasingly relevant. The Delegation urged the Secretariat to organize a series of seminars to raise awareness of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and of how to balance public health needs with the existing IP regime. It echoed the calls made by the UN Secretary General, the Director General of the WHO and many countries to declare medicines and vaccines related to COVID-19 to be a global public health good. A balanced adjustment in IPRs for technologies related to COVID-19, particularly vaccines, was therefore essential to ensuring the equitable universal distribution of vaccines on the basis of public health needs rather than the capacity to pay and free from undue monopoly controls. In addition to adjustments to the IP system, the Delegation wished to highlight six key challenges that required careful consideration. Firstly, on the development of international legal instruments, WIPO had to keep pace with technological and economic developments and help to resolve the impasse in normative discussions through consensus and political will. Priority should be given to the finalization of an international instrument on IP and GRs, TK and Folklore, and to the DLT. Moreover, there was a serious mismatch between the requirements of countries and the resources available. The regional bureaus were too understaffed and underequipped to address capacity-building tasks, which was reflected in an inordinate reliance on consultants. An urgent review was therefore needed to enhance WIPO's delivery of development projects. There had also been an unnecessary fragmentation of key functions across various units of WIPO, in particular in innovation-related issues and the provision of legal assistance, which had caused serious difficulties for Member States in obtaining coherent advice in areas of vital importance to them. Organizational structures should be aligned with

key functions as a matter of urgency. In addition, governance-related challenges seriously affected the effectiveness and accountability of WIPO operations and required urgent consideration, including of the number and duration of terms for officers in the SMT, the reporting lines of internal oversight bodies and the independence of staff associations. Owing to the COVID-19 situation, the question of whether to maintain or extend the tenure of existing senior management needed to be addressed urgently. Moreover, participation in key WIPO committees, including the Coordination Committee and the PBC, and in important discussions, such as on the draft agendas of WIPO bodies, should be open to all interested Member States. Lastly, in the age of digital connectivity, the issue of opening new External Offices represented a distraction. The evaluation of the entire network of External Offices should be open, inclusive and transparent and in line with the recommendations of the External Auditor's report. A serious review was needed to determine the rationale for establishing new External Offices and the development of a clearer strategy for offices outside Geneva.

89. The Delegation of Paraguay said that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, its National Directorate of Intellectual Property (DINAPI) had had to shift its focus towards developing public policies that optimized the processes and services it provided to users, and to modify its short-term objectives. One of its most important goals was to enhance the country's participation in matters of global IP administration. In that respect, Paraguay's accession to the WIPO-administered Nice and Locarno Agreements was a milestone for the country, reflecting its strengthened commitment to the protection of IPRs. In the area of technological infrastructure, the country had taken firm steps towards completing the automation and digitization of DINAPI so that it could become 100 per cent paperless and environmentally friendly by the start of 2021. In the area of piracy, counterfeiting and the protection of IPRs, Paraguay had fulfilled a significant objective by establishing a center for the coordination of IP, by a presidential decree. The chief priority of the center, managed by the National Intellectual Property Institute (INAPI), was to harmonize the efforts and actions of all the executive institutions in combating piracy and counterfeiting. In that context, it had forged partnerships with the judiciary, the Office of the Public Prosecutor and all the relevant entities of the national center. As a reflection of Paraguay's ongoing commitment to regional efforts to strengthen IP systems, the country was assuming the *pro tempore* chairmanship of Pro-Sur, which was the largest project for regional cooperation on industrial property in Latin America. In the area of training, the Delegation appreciated WIPO Academy, noting that Paraguay had carried out a successful patent drafting seminar involving the participation of experts from more than 10 countries in the region. Lastly, the Delegation was concerned about the fact that many countries did not have representation at WIPO, and hoped that the Organization's new leadership could help to address the matter accordingly, to ensure greater openness.

90. The Delegation of the Philippines said that, thanks to a whole-of-government approach prioritizing innovation in the national agenda, the country had reached the top 50 in the 2020 GII and ranked fourth among lower middle-income group economies. The Government had begun to implement laws to support innovation, such as the Philippine Innovation Act and the Innovation Start-Up Act. It had also completed its national IP Strategy with assistance from WIPO; intensified its government innovation programs; mainstreamed innovation in development and investment plans; linked government funding on research and development to IP protection; assisted MSMEs in using the IP system to enhance their competitiveness; harnessed collaboration among government agencies to promote IP creation, protection and enforcement; and, commenced operations as an international authority under the PCT to facilitate the entry of local inventions to the global patent system. On IP protection, there had been a record-high 47,282 annual filings in 2019, an almost 10 per cent increase on 2018. Trademark applications had posted the biggest annual growth in 2019 at 10 per cent, followed by industrial design with 7 per cent, utility models with 4 per cent and inventions with 2 per cent. The country's network of Innovation Technology Support Offices and TISCs had increased to 100 institutions, accounting for 54 per cent and 50 per cent of 2019's total local invention and utility model applications, respectively. The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines

(IPOP HL) had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by using information technology and infrastructure to ensure the continued provision of accessible, convenient, user-friendly and safe services to local and foreign stakeholders. It had completed the deployment of end-to-end electronic processing of IP registrations for online filings, and had adopted electronic requests for copyright registrations and deposits, applications and requests relating to technology transfer agreements, and commercial patent searches. IPOP HL had embraced the use of business solutions in its free IP education and capacity-building programs for stakeholders and the public. It had also employed digital solutions to allow verified complaints to be filed electronically, and mediation and hearings to be conducted on-line to facilitate the adjudication of IP cases. On IP enforcement, counterfeit and pirated products worth more than 22 billion Philippine pesos had been seized and the proposed Supreme Court Rules of Procedure for Intellectual Property Rights Cases were in the final stage of approval. At the international level, IPOP HL looked forward to working with WIPO and bilateral partners to promote the IP system to serve the greater good. The Philippines valued the important work of the IGC, and looked forward to progress on the draft DLT with hope that there could be a Diplomatic Conference once the appropriate level of readiness had been reached. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its continued support and partnership, and expressed hopes for productive and successful Assemblies.

91. The Delegation of Poland endorsed the statement made by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group, and the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states. It noted its particular appreciation for the current Director General's launching of the WIPO conversations on AI, which was key in discussions on the innovative economy. It hoped that the new SMT that would be established by the Director General-Elect would reflect the best possible competence, trust and geographical balance. The Delegation was confident that WIPO would continue to keep pace with technological changes and adapt to the new reality. The Delegation fully supported the work of WIPO on the various aspects related to IP and digital technologies, as well as markets such as AI or the video games industries. It welcomed the cooperation activities undertaken between the CEBS Group and WIPO, as well as the cooperation and assistance extended by the TDC, helping Poland to promote its IPRs.

92. The Delegation of Portugal aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states, and by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Delegation expressed sincere appreciation for support received in all areas of cooperation under Director General Francis Gurry, including the achievements in recent years of the Portuguese Industrial Property Institute, working alongside WIPO. Portugal was equally confident that Director General-Elect Daren Tang would contribute positively to deepening relations between Portugal and members of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) in the IP sphere, thus promoting development in the respective Member States. In that regard, Portugal was pleased to announce that in 2021, it would be organizing the first edition of the Lusophone Industrial Property Days, noting the importance of creating platforms for discussion, which would allow participants to share their experiences and disseminate good practices, promote consensus-building, and strengthen the ability of public bodies to meet the challenges of the Industrial Property system. Participants would include Portuguese-speaking countries and various international IP system stakeholders. The Delegation hoped to count on WIPO's support in organizing the event. Topics to be covered would include management of public bodies responsible for industrial property, policies on SMEs, protection of geographical indications as a strategic factor of differentiation, a means to continued growth and development in regions. Portugal was persuaded that the event would be an excellent opportunity, not just to share experiences but, above all, to consider the various challenges that all faced. In particular, with respect to the protection of appellations of origin and geographical indications and, specifically, on the Lisbon System, the Delegation was satisfied with the significant progress achieved in recent years, highlighting the European Union's recent accession to the system. Overall, and given the difficulties engendered by the

COVID-19 pandemic, the Delegation reiterated the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member states that underscored the importance of industrial property in favor of innovation in the health sector, enhanced competitiveness of economic operators and development in general. Portugal further noted that in the first half of 2021, the country would take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, guided by five main priorities; namely, Resilient Europe; Social Europe; Green Europe; Digital Europe; and Global Europe. In the era of digital transformation and the knowledge society, with growing determination to find more sustainable and efficient solutions, the Portuguese Presidency would prioritize promotion of the industrial property system, with the requisite emphasis on fostering awareness about the importance and benefits of protecting industrial property rights. In that regard, the goal would be to spotlight innovative solutions, especially in green technology and AI, targeting development and economic growth of modern societies. The Portuguese Presidency would also seek to promote an in-depth debate on the harmful effects of counterfeiting so as to pinpoint specific measures to be adopted by Member States in a bid to combat the scourge using a concerted and effective approach.

93. The Delegation of Qatar expressed its deepest thanks and gratitude to the outgoing Director General, Francis Gurry, for the great work he had accomplished in order to develop the organization's work and ensure its success. The great effort he made during his tenure and his dedication to his work on strengthening the global IP system were no secret to anyone. The Delegation stressed that the Qatari people witnessed those good efforts, as Mr. Gurry had spared no effort in showing the spirit of cooperation and advice towards Qatar. During his mandate, Qatar made great achievements in developing national IP policies and systems, especially through the great support that the country received to host a TISC. The Delegation wished him every success in his future endeavors. The Delegation also extended its warmest congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment as Director General of WIPO. The Delegation was convinced that Mr. Tang would follow the work in order to enhance WIPO global position and its growing ability to stimulate and harness innovation to achieve comprehensive development and prosperity for all. The Delegation expressed Qatar's support to Mr. Tang in undertaking his mission with success and facilitating the work of the Organization. Qatar was aware of the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the severe disruption that had resulted from the measures taken in the departments in charge of administering IP and IP users, including users of IP registration systems. It was also aware of the difficulty of communication between applicants and registration holders, or their agents, and international offices. Hence, the Delegation endorsed the proposals on the agenda of those Assemblies, which aimed at amending the regulations and giving effect to the relevant provisions in order to facilitate the use of various international IP systems under the current pandemic. On the other hand, the Delegation looked forward to completing the consideration of the postponed items from the Assemblies agenda, which would be resumed during the first half of 2021. The Delegation affirmed Qatar's support for the negotiations that were ongoing in the Organization and that aimed at developing laws for global protection. In that regard, a special mention was made of the negotiations within the SCCR in order to conclude and agree on the terms of multilateral agreements to guarantee international protection for the rights of broadcasting organizations. As mentioned previously, Qatar was ready to submit a request to host the diplomatic conference for concluding the signing of that agreement, in case a consensus was reached between members. In conclusion, and in view of the current circumstances, the Delegation expressed Qatar's solidarity with the Organization in order to continue its great role in promoting cooperation among Member States and the essential services provided to all members. The Delegation mentioned particularly the numerous innovations supported by WIPO that had contributed to the development of many of the global solutions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation hoped that the crisis would be quickly overcome and that WIPO would continue to lead the development of an effective and comprehensive international IP system in order to promote innovation and achieve sustainable global development.

94. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea stated that international cooperation was a key strategy to overcome the difficulties posed by COVID-19. WIPO had collaborated with Member States in promoting global IP dialogue and in sharing information on the COVID-19 measures of each IP office. The Delegation hoped that WIPO would provide a forum to spread IP office best practices, such as teleworking and video-consultation with users. It also suggested creating a manual of COVID-19 measures as a systematic response to unexpected crises in the future. The epidemic had been having a substantial negative impact on the global economy. Despite this situation, more emphasis should be placed on Research and Development (R&D) and IP to stimulate innovation and creativity essential for economic growth. As a part of advancing the global IP system, WIPO should expedite digital transformation for user accessibility and convenience. IP stakeholders should also be reminded of the importance of IP creations and protections as well as of R&D for swift recovery of the global economy. Furthermore, the recent crisis should not stop the efforts to bridge the IP knowledge gap between developing and developed countries. Through the Korea FIT, much effort had been made to build the IP capacity of the Republic of Korea's partner countries. The Delegation declared that the Republic of Korea would continue to strive for the prosperity of the international IP community.

95. The Delegation of the Republic of Moldova aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group. It noted with appreciation the leading role played by WIPO in the areas of innovation and AI, which were central to the reform of public services both domestically and internationally. The Government of Moldova was taking steps to stabilize the economy and consolidate its legal, financial and institutional framework to improve its capacity to respond to emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of a concerted effort to technologize and digitalize public services, the State Agency on Intellectual Property and other government bodies were working to facilitate public access to high-quality online services. The Government was also taking measures to promote the use of patented inventions in its response to the current public health crisis. It looked forward to a fruitful collaboration with WIPO and its Member States in that regard.

96. The Delegation of Romania, aligning itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group, said that Romania had supported the decisions adopted by the PBC and was confident that the postponed activities in the 2020 technical assistance cooperation plans would take place the following year. It also remained optimistic that the work on the normative agenda and the activities of the standing and permanent committees would resume. The Delegation was fully committed to cooperating with all Member States in a spirit of consensus, with a view to progressing with pending issues. Romania was also ready to participate constructively in the future discussions on the terms of reference of the 2021 evaluation of the WIPO network of external offices. While reiterating its offer to host a WIPO external office, the Delegation reaffirmed the importance of the Guiding Principles for the future review process.

97. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking in its national capacity, aligned itself with the statement of the CACEEC Group. The Delegation thanked Mr. Francis Gurry for the accomplishments achieved during his tenure, including his consistent efforts to advance the agenda of digital transformation in the field of IP. When it was necessary to work remotely, digitization became a key prerequisite for successful interaction between offices, as well as for the activities of all registration systems. The Delegation hoped that the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, would continue to actively advance the digital agenda. It stated that the Russian Federation, for its part, was prepared to support those initiatives. The Russian Federation had passed a law allowing applicants to attach three-dimensional models to their applications and providing for the issuance of electronic IP titles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian Federation had continued its active cooperation with international partners. Several events related to digital services, as well as a meeting of the 3D Task Force of the Committee on WIPO Standards had taken place via videoconferencing. The Russian

Federation had taken comprehensive measures in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, namely: organizing distanced interaction between applicants and examiners; optimizing the remote working arrangements of examiners of the Federal Service for Intellectual Property (ROSPATENT); and, extending the deadline for applicants to perform legally binding actions and pay fees until the end of the year. The Russian Federation called upon all WIPO Member States to consider possible ways to take similar measures with regard to international applications, as well as speed up data exchanges in the area of combating the spread of viruses. ROSPATENT was fast-tracking applications related to combating viruses and associated diseases. Approximately 300 applications for inventions and utility models related to combating viruses had already been submitted in 2020. Fifty patents had been issued. The Russian Federation had been the first country in the world to register a vaccine against the new coronavirus infection, COVID-19. The Delegation looked forward to results-oriented work during the upcoming series of meetings of the Assemblies.

98. The Delegation of Rwanda aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation reported that its government was creating the necessary environment to ensure that the national IP regime provided the right incentives to innovators and creators to develop new technologies addressing national concerns. Rwanda had ratified three key industrial property treaties since 2011 and taken steps to comply with them, and the Parliament of Rwanda had approved legislation to join the Marrakesh Treaty. Rwanda had carried out campaigns and administrative interventions to support growth in the Rwandan copyright industry. Technical support from WIPO had helped Rwanda reformulate its IP law of 2009, improve its ranking in the GII and appoint a cabinet member to the GII advisory board.

99. The Delegation of San Marino said that strengthening an innovation ecosystem was vitally important for the economic development of small countries such as San Marino, and indeed for the world at large, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. In its economic progress plan, "San Marino 2030", the Ministry of Industry, Handicraft and Trade had been conferring with all the country's socio-economic stakeholders with a view to identifying the areas of greatest interest for its economic development in the near term. IP would surely be an area for intensive focus. The Delegation welcomed the Organization's continued support in the context of the country's IP system, its technical assistance in implementing the IPAS software, WIPO Publish and the forthcoming WIPO File, as well as its organization of a recent event in San Marino to promote the Hague System and copyright treaties. The Government of San Marino had taken steps to make IP assets a source of wealth creation: In 2020, it had deposited its instruments of accession to four copyright treaties, with a view to adopting a new legislative act on copyright to implement recently-signed treaties and to ensure protection of digital works. Continued assistance from and cooperation with WIPO would be welcome in that regard. Bearing in mind the importance of human rights, the signing of the Marrakesh Treaty had been a particularly welcome development.

100. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia thanked the Director General for the various activities covered by his report. The Delegation reiterated its congratulations to the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang, wishing him every success, while expressing sincere thanks to Mr. Francis Gurry for his efforts during his tenure of the Organization. The Delegation highlighted some developments regarding IP in Saudi Arabia. The country had enacted and developed IP laws. It had also deposited, during the current month, instruments of accession to the Locarno and Vienna agreements and was planning to deposit instruments of accession to other treaties by the end of the current year. The Government of Saudi Arabia had adopted, in April of the current year, the Commercial Courts System and the transfer of jurisdiction for IP proceedings to those courts. The National Committee on Enforcement of IPRs was also established. Moreover, the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP) undertook a study on various possible infringements of IP in markets and on social media. The study covered more than 3,000 physical locations and over 1,000 internet sites, of which 230 infringing sites were



blocked and 5,000 infringing items seized. The Delegation added that the Draft National IP Strategy was under preparation. In an effort to increase IP knowledge, the SAIP Academy had sought to harness and promote various education methods provided by the WIPO Academy. That had led the country to be among the first ten in the world in benefiting from the training programs provided by WIPO, with the number of trainees rising from 570 in 2019 to over 3,700 during 2020. The Delegation announced that SAIP would also organize, in the coming month, the International Forum on IP Challenges, in the margins of the G20 Saudi Presidency, as an initiative to address IP-related priorities under global crises and pandemics. The Delegation expressed support for the statement made by the Delegation of Singapore, on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, on the different topics under consideration, as well as the statement made by the Delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group. In conclusion, the Delegation commended WIPO on its work towards using AI in its operations and services.

101. The Delegation of Serbia, associating itself with the statement by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group, said that WIPO had made excellent progress the previous year, with a significant increase in the number of applications filed under the PCT, the Lisbon Agreement and the Madrid Agreement. A number of accessions to WIPO-administered treaties had preceded the entry into force of the Beijing Treaty and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement. Use of the WIPO global databases had also risen. Finally, the IP Office of Serbia was preparing to mark its centennial by, *inter alia*, publishing a monography on the Office, with the assistance of WIPO.

102. The Delegation of Sierra Leone aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. In a context of continuing significant impact from the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and economic wellbeing of people around the world, the Delegation commended WIPO's valuable response, which included the WIPO COVID-19 search facility, the WIPO COVID-19 policy tracker, and the WIPO Crisis Management Dashboard. As a small developing country, Sierra Leone recognized that IP was a transformative tool that would help it rebuild its socio-economic infrastructures after the pandemic and achieve its SDGs. Strengthening an inclusive innovation ecosystem would be vitally important, now more than ever. The Delegation thanked WIPO and ARIPO for their many initiatives, particularly technical assistance, undertaken to support the development of Sierra Leone's IP system, which was still developing and still a work in progress. Guidance and assistance from WIPO would be used to effectively utilize IP and innovation to meet the country's SDGs and bridge the digital divide. The Delegation reaffirmed its constructive engagement with WIPO and its commitment to advancing the creation of a mutually beneficial IP ecosystem under WIPO's guidance and leadership.

103. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking in its national capacity, anticipated the emergence of new ideas and innovations, given the disruption caused by COVID-19 to health systems and business markets, and the heightened importance of innovation, IP protection, management and commercialization in the search for a vaccine. The Delegation expressed its commitment to supporting creators, entrepreneurs and enterprises through programs for IP acceleration, education, outreach and strategy. The Delegation looked forward to fostering partnerships to help creators and innovators leverage IP to overcome their challenges. Given the strong performance of Asian economies recorded in the latest GII, the Delegation expressed its appreciation for the partnerships forged with regional neighbors and its commitment to working closely with members of ASEAN and the Asia and the Pacific Group to build a robust regional IP system.

104. The Delegation of Slovakia associated itself with the statements by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Latvia on behalf of the CEBS Group. Noting the efficient continuation of the Organization's work, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, it also commended the International Bureau for its continued focus on securing the best available global services under the PCT, Madrid and

Hague Systems. Smooth systems, ongoing dedication to simplification and cost savings passed on to users would all be crucial for future use of those global IP services, even in the current health crisis. Turning to the working agenda, the Delegation thanked the IAOC for its report and efforts and believed that the External Auditor's recommendations on WIPO External Offices could facilitate Member States' discussions and decision-making. WIPO had organized the second session of the WIPO Conversation on IP and AI and the WIPO Conference on the Global Digital Content Market, providing an opportunity to share best practices, focus on issues, including those relating to copyright, and have fruitful discussions with various stakeholders. It also welcomed the results of the audit and evaluation activities carried out that year and expected the Secretariat to implement the recommendations in a timely manner. The Delegation welcomed the excellent financial results for the 2018/19 biennium presented in WIPO Performance Report and was satisfied that 73 per cent of 484 performance indicators had been fully achieved. The Delegation closed by thanking the TDC and WIPO Academy for their excellent cooperation and assistance. It was ready to continue close cooperation with WIPO, which would continue its role of promoting innovation and developing IP.

105. The Delegation of South Africa aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the Africa Group. It commended the leadership of the outgoing Director General, which had been at the forefront of embracing the digital revolution, including AI. It was pleased to note that the devastating COVID-19 pandemic had not had a severe financial impact on WIPO, although it was conscious of possible future impact on the commitments. However, the Delegation regretted that WIPO's normative work had stalled due to the pandemic, at a time when it was important to expedite work. It urged WIPO to continue its role in ongoing multilateral efforts to find innovative global solutions to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including finding a vaccine, which should be a key public good accessible to all. Finally, the Delegation supported the deferral of substantive discussions of the Assemblies and hoped that the hybrid meeting form of the Assemblies would be a success.

106. The Delegation of Spain recognized the significant achievements of Mr. Francis Gurry during his tenure as Director General, including the culture of budgetary discipline and managerial prudence he had brought to WIPO and the adoption of a treaty to protect the rights of performers worldwide. The Delegation hoped that his successor, Mr. Tang, would be remembered as the Director General who had successfully finalized the DLT and a broadcasting treaty.

107. The Delegation of Sri Lanka was pleased that it had been possible to organize the Assemblies despite the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Sri Lanka wished to express its appreciation to the Director General and various sectors of WIPO, including the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, the Madrid Registry and the Copyright and Creative Industries Sector, for their valuable cooperation in recent years. The TISC program, the Enabling the IP Environment Project and technical assistance to strengthen collective management societies in Sri Lanka were among the measures that had been implemented. Sri Lanka had also acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty in 2016 and was working on its implementation. Owing to timely government action, the spread of COVID-19 had been contained in Sri Lanka and government offices had been operating since May 2020 without any serious disruption to services. Steady progress had been made towards the introduction of new and comprehensive legislation to facilitate and protect the registration of geographical indications to safeguard the interests of producers and exporters of products originating from Sri Lanka, in particular Ceylon Tea and Ceylon Cinnamon. Work was ongoing to deposit the instrument of accession to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks by the end of 2020, and it was hoped that the country could accede to the WIPO Internet Treaties and the Beijing Treaty in the next biennium. With the world waiting for the invention of a successful vaccine, the advent of COVID-19 had increased the significance of IP as a tool, and the Delegation hoped that any such vaccine would be made available worldwide through patent-related flexibilities. The

Delegation conveyed its condolences to the families and loved ones of those who had passed away recently, and paid tribute to the memory of Ms. Carole Croella of the WIPO Copyright Law Division.

108. The Delegation of Sudan extended thanks and appreciation to Dr. Francis Gurry for the distinguished work he had accomplished for the Organization, especially in advancing the DA, wishing him all success in his future endeavors. The Delegation warmly congratulated Mr. Daren Tang on his appointment as the next Director General, expressing confidence in that he would continue to work diligently in order to promote the work of the Organization. The Delegation assured Mr. Tang of its support in his efforts to enhance the WIPO position, particularly with regard to stimulating innovation in the coming period. The Delegation endorsed statements made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group and by the Delegation of Qatar on behalf of the Arab Group, stressing that the year 2020 had witnessed unprecedented health conditions that had affected all aspects of life and caused the shortening of the current session agenda. Accordingly, the Delegation supported the statement of the African Group regarding the convening of an extraordinary session of the Assemblies in the first half of 2021 in order to hold substantive discussions. In that regard, necessary measures should be taken to make such discussions comprehensive and transparent. The Delegation extended, once again, thanks to WIPO, especially to the Regional Office for Arab Countries, the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Division for LDCs for their continuous efforts in providing technical assistance in order to develop and support the Sudan National Office, as well as in capacity building and awareness raising in the field of IP. In conclusion, the Delegation expressed its readiness to cooperate flexibly with all delegations and to participate actively in the current Assemblies and in the negotiations across the Groups to which it was geographically affiliated.

109. The Delegation of Sweden expressed full support for the statements made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B and by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of the European Union and its member states. The Delegation commended the Director General for his work on WIPO's Strategic Realignment Program (SRP), which focused on cross-cutting issues and good governance, including results-based management, transparency, accountability and a user-oriented approach to the Organization's mission. The Director General's personal commitment had been instrumental in adapting the IP system through the Marrakesh Treaty and other instruments to benefit the world's visually impaired. Sweden looked forward to future progress for WIPO under the leadership of its Director General-Elect, Daren Tang, particularly in the delivery of high-quality services and relevant normative development. WIPO should also continue to be a role model for good governance in the UN system by focusing on transparency, accountability and financial prudence, especially in light of the uncertain economic outlook following the pandemic. To overcome future challenges and deliver on its mission, WIPO would need to remain an attractive workplace for the brightest, most competent and innovative employees, ensuring work-life and gender balance, especially at the senior level, and taking a modern and inclusive approach to social and ethnic background, physical ability, religious belief and sexual orientation. Sweden stood ready to support work in that area. The country also attached great importance to WIPO's global IP services and would continue to contribute to efforts related to the PCT and Madrid Systems. The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy and demand for WIPO services were yet to be seen. A robust IP system with efficient and transparent governance would be critical to meet the challenges ahead. Following WIPO's strong financial results in 2020, continued financial prudence and transparency would be essential to benefit current and future users of the global IP system. Since IP was a driver of economic development, competitiveness and innovation, an effective IP legal framework remained an important basis for investment in knowledge-based capital. The pandemic had accelerated digitalization, making an effective IP law or framework central to all economies. As part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution ("Industry 4.0"), AI and the digital transformation of business ecosystems, economic development and competitiveness would increasingly depend on the generation and

exploitation of knowledge. IP management was also key to creating and protecting new business models. The digital transformation had affected the management of intangible assets and thus the total value of many companies. New actors and business ideas in such fields as videoconferencing and AI-based translation were drastically shifting the market and IP landscape, increasing the complexity of third-party rights. The Delegation welcomed new ideas to tackle those challenges, including the “WIPO for Creators” initiative, which had been established in cooperation with the Music Rights Awareness foundation in Sweden. Collaboration and open innovation were crucial to drive research and development to market. WIPO PROOF was a good initiative to safeguard digital files, which could easily be subject to misuse or misappropriation. The breadth of the digital transformation would require adaptation of the global IP system. Sweden supported WIPO’s efforts to identify issues and develop answers to policy questions in that regard. The Delegation noted with satisfaction WIPO’s work on AI and welcomed the current dialogue and interest shown in that area. AI would enable IP offices to improve such internal processes as searching, image analysis and classification. Such advances would have implications for global IP infrastructure and would generate knowledge and capacity that should be shared in the global IP community. To facilitate a green transition, IP systems should promote innovation towards the achievement of the SDGs, particularly with respect to climate. Among global efforts to address climate change, the Delegation considered WIPO GREEN, which connected providers and seekers of environmentally friendly technologies and brought together key players to catalyze green technology innovation and diffusion, a notable initiative in that regard. The Delegation appreciated the cooperation between WIPO and the Swedish Intellectual Property Office (PRV) concerning international training programs financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Together with WIPO’s LDCs Division, the Government of Sweden offered IP-related programs for LDCs, and in collaboration with the Traditional Knowledge Division, offered a program on IP and genetic resources in support of innovation.

110. The Delegation of Switzerland aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. It warmly thanked the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his unfailing commitment to the Organization, particularly during the last 12 years at its head. Stressing that Mr. Gurry left behind a financially sound and attractive organization as a global provider of IP services, it wished him all the best in his future career. The Delegation also welcomed the entry into office of the new Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, on 1 October 2020. Mr. Tang could count on Switzerland’s full support in achieving the objectives he had defined and outlined during the electoral process. Furthermore, Switzerland noted that the strengthening and the balanced development of the international IP framework was a key element for the future of WIPO. One way to achieve this goal was to give attention to all WIPO’s registration and classification systems, to ensure their proper functioning and to continue to encourage their growth. In general, the attractiveness of these systems for users was closely linked to the quality of the international registrations, which implied short processing times, reliable titles of protection, adequate IT solutions and innovative work tools adapted to needs. The Delegation further indicated that WIPO had a central role to play in multilateral and international discussions on issues related to IPRs. The Organization had to fully assume its role of leader in these matters, in cooperation with the relevant UN agencies and other international organizations. Furthermore, Switzerland wished to recall that normative work was also at the heart of WIPO’s mandate. Its effects had a direct impact on the users of IP systems. Switzerland was calling for a resumption of ongoing normative work. In conclusion, the Delegation assured the Chair of its willingness to contribute to a positive conclusion of the Assemblies.

111. The Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed appreciation to Director General, Francis Gurry, for his distinguished role in leading WIPO over the past years. The Delegation congratulated the Director General-Elect, Daren Tang, and assured him of its full support in carrying out his duties, expressing confidence on his ability to elevate the Organization to the level of new challenges, based on his extensive experience in supporting creativity and

innovation initiatives in Singapore. The Delegation also thanked the Secretariat for the efforts made to hold the current session under the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and for providing the necessary documents and references for the meetings. The Delegation endorsed the statement made on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation expressed its sincere appreciation to Mr. Francis Gurry, who sought, during the twelve years of his tenure of office, to develop the Organization's work and bring it to an advanced level. The Director General had contributed in strengthening the creativity and invention infrastructure in various countries of the world, as well as meeting the needs of developing countries and supporting WIPO initiatives, such as WIPO GREEN and the newly launched WIPO PROOF. Mr. Gurry's high level of professionalism and experience, as well as his wise leadership had enabled those achievements. The Delegation added that the Syrian Arab Republic continued to make great efforts in order to support creators and inventors, assist SMEs, and hold the Al-Bassil Exhibition for Creativity and Invention (ABECI), despite the unjust conditions of war and the unilateral coercive measures that it had been facing. By offering prizes to competition winners, WIPO provided great support and contributed to the success of the ABECI editions. In addition, WIPO assisted in preparing customized national guides for SMEs, namely Making a Mark, Looking Good and Inventing the Future. WIPO had also provided support for initiating the TISC and the National IP Training Center (NIPTC) projects. In that regard, the Delegation hoped to finalize the signing of an MoU with the Organization during the current year in order to start implementation procedures for those important projects. Work was also underway to develop a National IP Strategy in cooperation with WIPO, considering the importance of enhancing the Organization's role and contribution in developing all creative and innovative aspects of the inclusive development in the Syrian Arab Republic. Within this framework, a commission representing all actors from the public and private sectors and SMEs was working to formulate that strategy. A national questionnaire was being completed and would define a cooperation program including the provision of support to various sectors. The Syrian Arab Republic continued to implement and develop a program to disseminate IP culture, which included the targeting of universities and schools by raising awareness on the importance of IP and encouraging them to support creative steps. The program also focused on SMEs and the trade and business sector. In that regard, information and publications issued by WIPO had been compiled, with a summary in Arabic, and made available on CD-ROMs. Such material had been distributed to various sectors, while focusing on the use of free WIPO patent information services and the training on using global databases containing patent documents. Other activities included implementing the WIPO Outreach Program, developing the website of the Directorate of Commercial and Industrial Property Protection (DCIPP), and issuing a monthly electronic gazette containing IP information and news, as well as registration data for trademarks, designs and patents in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Delegation stressed that the IP culture dissemination program had led to mainstreaming IP concepts in schools, institutes and universities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Program outputs were materialized after the signing of an MoU with the Ministry of Education aimed at developing creative talents and refining skills, relying on awareness programs based on WIPO publications in the field. In conclusion, the Delegation joined calls for ensuring greater geographical representation in all governing bodies of WIPO, and focusing on DA in the next phase.

112. The Delegation of Thailand commended WIPO for its efforts to use virtual platforms to facilitate discussions and progress in IP-related areas in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Thailand prioritized the development of national IP policies that would balance the interests of right holders and society. Considerable efforts had been made to strengthen the country's IP infrastructures and create an IP-friendly environment. In order to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Thailand had taken a number of steps to enhance the functions of IP offices and ensure the accessibility of IP systems for applicants, including encouraging the use of e-filing and e-payment systems. There had been close coordination between relevant stakeholders to combat infringements of IPRs in physical and online marketplaces. Diverse IP-related awareness-raising and educational activities had been arranged, including a mini-marathon. Furthermore, social media had proved to be a highly

effective medium for raising awareness of IP and Thailand had organized a well-received photo contest to celebrate World IP Day 2020. There had been little progress in WIPO norm-setting activities owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and further efforts continued to be required in certain areas, including negotiation on the protection of GRs, TK and TCEs under the WIPO IGC. The Delegation encouraged Member States to make efforts to find a positive and acceptable solution for all, including through potential adjustments to the negotiation mandate and relevant programs.

113. The Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago noted that the country had acceded to four WIPO treaties and conventions: the Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations; the Beijing Treaty; the Marrakesh Treaty; and, the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks (the Singapore Treaty). Trinidad and Tobago had also been preparing its instrument of accession to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks. In terms of legislation, the country had amended its Copyright Act to facilitate adherence to the Beijing and Marrakesh Treaties and had introduced the Trade Marks Act No. 8 of 2015, with accompanying regulations, to facilitate modern and progressive trademark law and implementation of the Singapore Treaty. The country was now in the process of drafting amendments to its legislation acceding to the PLT and the Geneva Act (1999) of the Hague Agreement. In terms of online filing, the country had made significant progress, with WIPO support, in carrying out the WIPO-FILE project. On March 27, 2020, the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office (TTIPO) had launched an online system facilitated by WIPO-FILE for the electronic filing of applications and online payment through the national GovPay system, the Government's first online payment service. In the area IP enforcement, a manual for IP prosecutors had been completed, and relevant stakeholders had been meeting to establish an official IP enforcement unit. Amendments to the Copyright Act and the new Trade Marks Act had incorporated modern enforcement provisions as reflected in the manual. A video entitled Building Respect for IP had been premiered at the ACE meeting in 2019 and broadcasted on national television. With regard to training, the National IP Training Center had successfully completed its second "train the trainer" module. In terms of technology and information, the Government was looking forward to the next phase of its TISC project and working to support the local sporting and mobile application ecosystems. In the area of publications, signature of an MoU was anticipated between the country's national library and information system authority and the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), led by WIPO. The MoU would facilitate access to more than half a million books for the country's blind and visually impaired. Internationally, Trinidad and Tobago continued to collaborate with other member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and engage in South-South cooperation with the National Institute of Industrial Property (INAPI) in Chile. Trinidad and Tobago supported the conclusion of a broadcasting treaty in light of the burgeoning commercial activity in that vital area of cross-border trade.

114. The Delegation of Tunisia extended its sincere thanks to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for the efforts he had made to develop strategies and advance the work of the Organization in its various fields of activity. The Delegation commended his distinguished management during his two mandates, with successful achievements that contributed effectively to enhancing the ability of the Organization to play an important role in promoting economic, social and cultural development. The efforts of the Secretariat in ensuring good preparation of the session were also highly appreciated. The Delegation reiterated Tunisia's congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang, who was about to assume his duties as Director General, and wished him every success, stressing Tunisia's readiness to contribute effectively to the success of his mission. The Delegation endorsed the statements made by the Groups to which it belonged. As was reflected in its national trends, Tunisia attached great importance to IP and IP-related international rules, with the aim of ensuring the legitimate interests of IP users and stimulating innovation and creativity. In that regard, the country was seeking to align its national laws and procedures with relevant international standards and to join IP-related international treaties. The Delegation valued the role of the Organization in seeking to build an integrated

and more balanced IP system that took into account the needs and concerns of all Member States, especially developing and LDCs. The Delegation emphasized the essential role of WIPO in achieving SDGs and related targets. The effective involvement of the Organization in that field through the submission of important regular and periodic reports was greatly valued. Accordingly, the Delegation invited WIPO to pursue that reporting effort, and Member States to interact with the related outputs. The Delegation expressed Tunisia's appreciation for the important and leading role played by WIPO in supporting the efforts of developing and LDCs to develop their IP national institutions, through capacity-building and technical assistance. In that context, reference was made to the technical cooperation programs between Tunisia and WIPO, and appreciation expressed for the contribution of the Organization to developing the IP system in the country, with the WIPO Regional Bureau of Arab Countries as a supervising and coordinating body. In conclusion, the Delegation reiterated Tunisia's commitment to developing more cooperation with WIPO in all relevant areas in order to further promote and protect human creativity.

115. The Delegation of Turkey said that its Government had drafted a new IP strategy paper for 2019–2023 to address the continual evolution of IP in response to rapidly changing innovation ecosystems. Together with the recently enacted Intellectual Property Rights Code, the new IP strategy would ensure the application of international best practices in IP governance. It would also promote the prompt and diligent processing of an ever-increasing number of applications. The Turkish Patent and Trademark Office (TURKPATENT) ranked among the world's busiest IP offices. WIPO would play an important role during the economic recovery period following the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also face new challenges in respect of vaccine research, test data, access to medicine and sustainable local production, for example, in addition to challenges posed by AI and big data. WIPO was a vital platform for making decisions on the future of the global IP eco-system and Turkey was committed to helping to reach consensus on longstanding agenda items.

116. The Delegation of Uganda associated itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. The continued support and investment of WIPO, notably with respect to the IPAS, had enabled the national IP office to adapt and continue its work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the office's electronic administration services had enabled startups providing masks, ventilators and other health solutions to market their products in the country. Uganda was grateful to the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, the Austrian Patent Office, the European Patent Office and the Swedish Patent and Registration Office for agreeing to provide search and examination services for applicants from Uganda. Efforts were also being made to boost cooperation with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the Korea Intellectual Property Office. Lastly, the Delegation supported calls to convene extraordinary sessions of the Assemblies in 2021.

117. The Delegation of Ukraine said that the ongoing priority of the Government of Ukraine was to complete its institutional reforms in the field of IP in the coming months. The final step of the reforms would be the establishment of the National IP Authority under the Ukrainian IP Institute (Ukrpatent). That would enable the creation of an optional two-level state system for the legal protection of IP, with the potential to develop and implement a transparent public model to overcome existing challenges and risks, and offer effective IP tools as incentives to improve the economic performance of Ukraine. The Ministry for the Development of Economic Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine highly appreciated the significant contribution and inputs of WIPO in supporting the implementation of joint initiatives for innovation and IP capacity building. Following the path of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine aimed to join the CEBS Group, which would reflect the country's geographical and historical realities. The Delegation invited all CEBS countries to support the aspirations of Ukraine.

118. The Delegation of the United Arab Emirates expressed sincere condolences to those affected by the of the COVID-19 pandemic and regretted the losses incurred by WIPO in this

regard, while appreciating the dedicated efforts devoted by WIPO during the pandemic in order to continue providing vital services. New trademark registration and patent processing continued without interruption through IPAS and PCT, respectively. The Delegation was very pleased that the Beijing Treaty had recently entered into force, as the United Arab Emirates had been one of the first countries to join. The Delegation extended sincere thanks to Dr. Francis Gurry for his great efforts during his tenure as Director General of WIPO. He had, indeed, contributed to adding a distinctive footprint and great value to the global IP system and reinforced its role in achieving development for all. The Delegation also extended heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Daren Tang on his election as the new Director General, and emphasized that the United Arab Emirates was looking forward to continuing cooperation with Mr. Tang and WIPO to accomplish more achievements that serve innovation activities and enhance the role of the United Arab Emirates as a vital center for IP at the regional and global levels. The economic impact of the pandemic, which spread on a global scale, had demonstrated the need to build a knowledge economy and the pivotal role of IP systems in achieving that. Despite these unusual circumstances during the current year, the United Arab Emirates was able to fulfill a historic achievement in the space sector, which was the successful launch of the Hope Probe and the start of its tour to explore planet Mars. The United Arab Emirates had been focusing on promoting technology and innovation, based on a long-term vision and continuous support from its wise leadership. That fact was reflected in the GII 2020, where the country maintained its first rank in the Arab world for the fifth year in a row, and progressed by two ranks globally. Moreover, the United Arab Emirates had always showed interest in determined people and was still committed to enhancing their creativity and intellectual contributions to sustainable economic development. That constant approach promoted by the country was steadily reflected in many related treaties, such as the Marrakesh Treaty, in order to support access by determined people to intellectual works in a facilitated manner. In conclusion, the Delegation welcomed the proposed agenda and confirmed the commitment of the United Arab Emirates to strengthening its role in advancing that transformation towards a new, more flexible and sustainable economic model.

119. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking in its national capacity, aligned itself with the statement of Group B, and said that it welcomed the efforts made to ensure the Assemblies could take place in the current unprecedented times. The meeting of the governing bodies was an overdue return to the intergovernmental work of the Organization. The Delegation looked forward to seeing the full use of WIPO's convening power to drive forward strong collaboration across the membership with stakeholders to find solutions to the complex IP policy challenges, such as those arising from AI or from big data. The current crisis was an opportunity to expedite some ongoing processes, such as digital transformation, bringing the Organization and its services fully into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Delegation would continue to play an active role in the important organizational and governance mechanisms and structures underpinning the results achieved by WIPO, advocating the principles of accountability, transparency, ethics and independence across the Organization.

120. The Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. It appreciated the continued support of WIPO, particularly in the areas of skills development and capacity building. In that regard, activities had been carried out in 2019 to improve the knowledge and skills of women entrepreneurs in conjunction with the Institute of Gender Studies of the University of Dar es Salaam, and a project had been devised to build the capacities of SMEs with respect to IP. Moreover, an electronic data management system would shortly be established to enable the more effective processing of applications. The Delegation wished to thank WIPO for its assistance in launching the ARIPO Master's Degree in Intellectual Property at the University of Dar es Salaam and would appreciate further support with the provision of materials, including access to electronic publications. Admissions to the course would doubtless be positively influenced by the launch of the WIPO-ARIPO training of trainers program in East Africa. The ranking of the United Republic of Tanzania in the GII 2020, which was the highest of its peer



income group, demonstrated its efforts over the past five years to promote industrialization through creativity and innovation. The country had also acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty in April 2020.

121. The Delegation of the United States of America endorsed the statement delivered by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. It was pleased that the use of WIPO's patent, trademark and industrial design registration services had steadily increased and that two important copyright treaties had come into force during the term of outgoing Director General Mr. Francis Gurry. The Delegation was confident that WIPO would continue as a major international body advancing global creativity and innovation, and it would work with the new Director General Mr. Daren Tang to promote IP in all sectors of society, throughout all regions of the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO had been a driving force in helping IP offices worldwide consult together, learn from one another and share best practices. Innovation and entrepreneurship were thriving despite the pandemic. The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) would continue to examine patent and trademark applications with unprecedented efficiency. It had striven to help the innovative community overcome the current pandemic-related challenges *via* numerous means: new programs to expedite examination of patent and trademark applications related to COVID-19; deadline extensions and fee waivers; use of video-conferencing by examiners and administrative judges; and, allowing for electronic filing of all documents and applications including planned patent applications. The USPTO recognized that licensing existing technology could further accelerate development of new technology during crises; accordingly, it had launched the "Patents 4 Partnership" platform enabling inventors to showcase their patents and potential licensees to identify technology they wished to license. Using that platform, an owner of a patent or published patent application covering a COVID-19-related invention could voluntarily list it as available for licensing. The United States Copyright Office had also taken specific actions to continue mission-critical functions during the pandemic, from practice changes to rule adjustments to enable use of its registration, recordation and licensing services. The Copyright Office, created 150 years previously, had maintained a busy pace of issuing policy studies, conducting rule-makings, and providing public education and outreach to many audiences. In light of the current crisis and the heightened focus on IP, IP experts should be involved in all important IP policy discussions. Accordingly, as the UN agency responsible for IP services, policy, information and cooperation, WIPO had the necessary expertise and experience to address IP and innovation issues and should play a leading role in IP policy discussion by any UN entity. The United States of America looked forward to working with the Secretariat and other Member States to ensure that WIPO continued to be a smoothly functioning, transparent and effective organization. It was committed to maintaining WIPO services at the highest level and to ensuring that WIPO's primary focus would be the organization of the value of IPRs.

122. The Delegation of Viet Nam, speaking in its national capacity, aligned itself with the statements of ASEAN and the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It looked forward to further progress in international norm-setting in relation to the DLT and the IGC. Despite the unprecedented challenges and severe disruption posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 45,404 IP applications had been processed in Viet Nam in the first eight months of 2020, an increase of 7.2 per cent over the same period in 2019. Industrial property protection titles had increased by 26.8 per cent, of which the number of exclusive patent licenses granted had increased by 86.9 per cent. Viet Nam had also begun to implement the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs. In the nearly nine months since the Hague Agreement had taken effect in respect to the country, the national IP Office had received approximately 100 applications designating Viet Nam. Relevant ministries and agencies had issued plans for the implementation of the National IP Strategy, and most projects supported by WIPO were being implemented effectively and adapted to the present situation, including the IPAS, the Enabling the IP Environment Project and the TISC program. Furthermore, Viet Nam had made great efforts to promote innovation and had retained 42<sup>nd</sup> place out of 131 economies worldwide in the GII 2020. The Delegation expressed its sincere

thanks to the Director General and the Secretariat for the technical and other assistance that had made such achievements possible. Viet Nam was confident that the WIPO leadership would play its part to ensure equitable and affordable universal access to vaccines and tools in the response to COVID-19.

123. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, referring to the drastic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Zimbabweans' health and socioeconomic livelihoods, said that strategies to curtail the virus's spread had derailed efforts to implement the national Intellectual Property Policy and Implementation Strategy. Travel restrictions had also resulted in the suspension of training and capacity-building programs that were essential to increasing IP awareness and use. Turning to cooperation with WIPO, the enrolment of an officer from the Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Office in the Madrid fellowship program was boosting the transfer of skills and technical assistance and, in turn, the Office's efficiency and productivity. The Master's Degree in Intellectual Property, offered by the WIPO Academy, ARIPO and Africa University was currently being offered online, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act was now being reviewed, following the 2019 accession of Zimbabwe to the Marrakesh Treaty and the Beijing Treaty.

124. The Representative of the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) said that OAPI had strengthened its collaborative ties with WIPO in recent years. The extensive efforts made by WIPO to promote IP and foster development around the world were evidenced by its commitment to support OAPI in implementing its 2018–2022 strategic plan. Thanks to the modernization of its computer systems, OAPI had been able to introduce teleworking from the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and continue its activities, including the handling of patent applications filed electronically. Together with its partners, OAPI had rolled out new training programs on collective management and patent engineering for the institutional capacity-building of its member states. Other activities carried out for the benefit of member states – with the valued support of the European Union, UPOV and the French Development Agency – included projects on plant varieties, geographical indications, and the development of IP within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Furthermore, OAPI and WIPO had continued their collaboration in respect of: (i) the Master's Degree in Intellectual Property, in conjunction with the University of Yaoundé II; (ii) the PCT Fellowship Program for Graduate Students; (iii) work on GRs, TK and folklore; and, (iv) the implementation of the ARIPO–OAPI–WIPO Tripartite Agreement, including the study on the harmonization of the ARIPO and OAPI systems. OAPI was grateful to the Director General and his team for responding positively to the majority of its requests and undertook to continue strengthening relations between the two organizations.

125. The Representative of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) associated with the statement made by the Delegation of Zimbabwe on behalf of the African Group. ARIPO was grateful for the continued support of WIPO in improving its ICT system, particularly its online services, which had provided a strong foundation for the continuation of its work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The assistance of WIPO in extending the ARIPO Member States Module and regional database was likewise greatly appreciated. Activities carried out over the past year in conjunction with WIPO and OAPI included a round table discussion on IP and the African Continental Free Trade Area, and webinar-based awareness campaigns on such topics as the role of IP offices in the context of COVID-19 and the opportunities afforded by regional and international treaties and agreements. Progress had also been made in the area of capacity building: higher education programs on IP were now available in Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. ARIPO looked forward to continuing its fruitful collaboration with WIPO.

126. The Representative of the Patent Office of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC Patent Office) said that most national economies continued to suffer from the repercussions of the outbreak of COVID-19. It was important for WIPO to work towards facing

and finding effective solutions to the health, economic, social and security-related effects and challenges caused by the pandemic, including the disruptions to the movement of goods and to global supply chains of vital equipment and materials. In response to the economic uncertainty, the GCC Patent Office was discussing a number of measures, including the extension of time limits and the provision of some procedural flexibilities to reduce the burdens on patent applicants and patent attorneys around the world, assisting them while preserving their rights in a way that did not conflict with the legal texts of the GCC Patent Office. The WIPO ecosystem and its international agreements continued to play a pivotal role in stimulating research, development and innovation in public and private sectors around the world. This would be vital to finding vaccines and treatment for COVID-19, and to developing medical devices, tools and smartphone applications that could contribute to monitoring it, limiting its spread and minimizing its health effects. WIPO would also be required to make use of the flexibilities stipulated in international agreements regarding the regulation of exports of related IPRs in emergencies and global pandemic situations. The Representative looked forward to the further expansion of WIPO's role in establishing a balanced and effective international IP system able to help to tackle the pandemic, while stimulating innovation and creativity and taking into account various levels of development.

127. The Representative of the Inter-American Association of Intellectual Property (ASIPI) described the Association as a non-profit organization founded 56 years ago to promote and protect the collective interests of its members, encourage regulatory development, protect IP in the Americas and improve the knowledge and professional practices of its members. Over the years, ASIPI had entered into productive partnerships with bodies that shared its vision, including WIPO. ASIPI had collaborated with WIPO on various projects to promote IP in Latin America at the regional and country levels, including activities of the Patent Law Division, such as a course on patent drafting held at an ASIPI seminar in March 2020 in Montevideo, Uruguay. ASIPI was working to ensure that that workshop would be recognized by Latin American IP offices. In addition, ASIPI had supported WIPO in carrying out Roving Workshops on PCT and ePCT services in the region's countries. In view of current world conditions, ASIPI considered it important for WIPO to support the efforts of Latin American countries to digitalize platforms and train officials. ASIPI supported the WIPO GREEN Acceleration Project and, through its own ASIPI Verde program, encouraged innovation and entrepreneurship in environmental conservation, the fight against climate change and social welfare in Latin America. ASIPI had recently launched the ASIPI Academy to train the legal community through courses on IP and related topics. In view of the high quality of the courses that the WIPO Academy had been providing for many years, ASIPI called for a collaboration agreement that would enable the ASIPI Academy and the WIPO Academy to work together to support the IP community in Latin America. ASIPI was confident that cooperation between the two Academies would contribute to strengthening IP, thereby promoting creativity and innovation.

128. The Representative of the Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) explained that the CCFN was an independent, international non-profit alliance whose membership included companies and organizations from many developed and developing countries. Its mission was to preserve the legitimate right of producers and consumers worldwide to use common names, to protect the value of internationally recognized brands and to prevent new barriers to commerce. WIPO members and interested parties should be provided balanced information on issues related to common (or generic) names, which should be afforded equal stature to geographical indications in WIPO's policies, programs, and initiatives. That would allow WIPO members and interested parties to make informed decisions in the best interests of their producers, consumers, trading partners, and other stakeholders. CCFN stated it was dedicated to working alongside WIPO to address the unbalanced approaches to geographical indication policies in markets around the world. Those policies would put at risk due process rights, transparency, free commercial speech and public consultation procedures, and would create barriers to widely produced common name products. Balancing the interests of common name users with those of geographical indication holders was a fundamental component of ensuring

that IP systems took into account the interests of all relevant stakeholders. Implementation of the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement of 2015 (“the Geneva Act”), which took effect on February 26, 2020, was an important opportunity to put those principles into action. For fair implementation of their commitments, the parties to that agreement should ensure that the necessary due process measures were in place to appropriately consider those appellations of origin and geographical indications so that the rights of trademark owners and generic term users were respected. While the Geneva Act and the Common Regulations had provided for some level of safeguards for trademark owners and users of generic terms, there was the possibility that varying approaches to implementation of the Act in the acceding jurisdictions undermined these safeguards and put their rights at risk. History had shown that countries that had joined the Lisbon Agreement had not always had the best mechanisms in place to implement the Agreement even-handedly, and had left both owners of prior trademarks and users of generic terms vulnerable to negative impacts. WIPO and its members should note that the Geographical Indication Committee of the International Trademark Association (INTA) had responded to this challenge by providing guidance to acceding jurisdictions regarding the fair application of the Act in their jurisdictions. That guidance took into account the four pillars of the INTA Board Resolution Regarding the Protection of Geographical Indications: (1) protection of prior trademarks; (2) transparency and due process; (3) standing of third-parties to object to geographical indication protections; and, (4) protection of generic terms from being monopolized by geographical indications. The INTA geographical indications Committee’s Geneva Act implementation recommendation paper covered the practical considerations associated with the implementation of any IP regime and made the following four recommendations: (1) The acceding jurisdictions to the Geneva Act should institute a review and examination process once geographical indications had been notified to those jurisdictions. A robust review and examination process was essential, as protection of a geographical indication was automatically granted one year after notification of the geographical indication to the acceding country if no action was taken by the acceding country. (2) Geographical indications should be published for opposition well in advance of the geographical indication protection, and third parties should be provided with fair and effective procedures for objecting to those applications. (3) The acceding jurisdictions should provide clear guidance on valid grounds for refusal, opposition and cancellation, and should specify clear and objective criteria as to what was constituted by a generic term in those jurisdictions. (4) Each acceding jurisdiction should provide effective protections for existing trademarks and protections providing for the continued use of generic terms. The Representative said that fair and equitable application of IP protections was critical to maintaining the necessary balance in IP systems to respect both the rights of new applicants – in this case Geographical Indication and appellation of origin holders – as well as the rights of trademark owners and users of generic terms. CCFN was concerned that many countries did not have the necessary processes in place to responsibly complete a fair and robust process within a year of notification. In that case, a country should inform WIPO that the term would be under consideration but would not be recognized until the country gave positive notification to WIPO. The Representative was ready to work with WIPO and any country to ensure that such processes were established and followed on the national and international level. It expressed its eagerness to work collaboratively in the future development of WIPO’s and WIPO members’ programs as they relate to geographical indications and common names.

129. The Representative of the Center for International Intellectual Property Studies (CEIPI) said that the growth of IP systems had been unprecedented under the guidance of outgoing Director General Francis Gurry. WIPO was in excellent financial health despite considerable challenges, including the current global health crisis. With respect to the normative agenda, the resounding success of the Beijing Treaty and the Marrakesh Treaty had to some extent offset the regrettable stagnation of other projects, which was attributable in part to the general crisis of multilateralism. Moreover, platforms such as WIPO GREEN, WIPO Re:Search and the Patent Information Initiative for Medicines, all of which were established under the direction of Francis Gurry, provided new forms of international cooperation. The Representative hoped that

its collaborative ties with WIPO would continue to be strengthened under the Organization's new leadership.

130. The Representative of *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)* said that, as a specialized agency of the UN, WIPO must help to address weaknesses and inequities in the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. The appropriation of knowledge and incentives from R&D, based on exclusive rights, was slowing collaborative efforts to find a vaccine or an effective treatment for COVID-19. Exclusive rights over vaccines and medicines hindered the speedy production and distribution to all those in need. Accordingly, WIPO must support implementation of the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool of WHO, which promoted the open sharing of knowledge related to COVID-19. WIPO, together with WHO and other UN agencies, must call upon governments and other stakeholders to design and implement an international legal framework to ensure that knowledge and innovation related to COVID-19 and climate change could become global goods available to all on fair terms. In addition, WIPO must integrate needs for access to knowledge and innovation related to COVID-19 and climate change into the work of all its regulatory and technical assistance bodies.

131. The Representative of the Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), which worked with libraries in developing countries and transition economy countries in order to enable access to knowledge, highlighted the role that outgoing Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, had played in the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty, which covered nearly 100 countries and benefitted millions of people. The Representative was confident that WIPO's new leadership would respond effectively to the global challenge posed by the pandemic as well as that of climate change. For EIFL, the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the critical need for modern copyright laws that fully supported the shift to online education and critical research. During the unprecedented crisis, classroom teaching and access to library collections had moved online. While vital COVID-19 research depended on global collaboration, many national copyright laws were out-of-date and did not support the digital environment. In that respect, the SCCR should accelerate its work on limitations and exceptions to overcome identified obstacles in the three critical areas: online teaching, the right to research and digital preservation. Lastly, the Representative extended its condolences on the recent passing of Ms. Carole Croella, who had been a valued member of WIPO's Copyright Law Division, especially for her work in Africa.

132. The Representative of the Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA) said that EIPA had always worked in cooperation with its strategic partners to increase public awareness of IP in the United Arab Emirates. That work had consisted of ensuring protection from IP crimes, raising awareness of IPRs and participating in relevant regional and international events. In light of the recent challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, EIPA had been able to maintain 100 per cent continuity of its programs and adopt a modern technological approach to its training sessions and workshops, including in relation to its Electronic IP Week, IP Expert Diploma and the Emirati Women's Conference. The Representative looked forward to continuing sustainable cooperation with WIPO in raising IP to a distinguished level in the United Arab Emirates and the region as a whole.

133. The Representative of the Health and Environment Program (HEP) said that the departure of the Director General marked the end of a period of intensive cooperation between HEP and WIPO. Indeed, HEP had attended numerous WIPO meetings since 2001, including nearly every meeting of the IGC. It was regrettable that IGC had been unable to reach consensus owing to the contrary interests of parties. Also unfortunate was the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic and the WIPO decision to exclude NGOs, including those with an office in Geneva, from a physical presence, prevented HEP from being able to wish the outgoing and incoming Directors General well in person.

134. The Representative of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), representing 2.5 million libraries globally, expressed the IFLA's condolences for the passing of Carole Croella, commending her dedication and professionalism as a credit to WIPO and the UN. The Representative said that COVID-19 had revealed a need for rules that work in the digital age, allowing libraries to support education, research and culture, both online and offline. The IFLA, while welcoming the goodwill shown by rightholders, did not consider voluntary actions a substitute for the clarity and certainty of legislative action, which WIPO could help to advance for the benefit of governments and stakeholders.

135. The Representative of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations (IFRRO) said that IFRRO looked forward to working together with WIPO to achieve the vision and priorities of the Director General-Elect, building on the achievements of his predecessor. The Representative reported that the global health crisis had dramatically affected the publishing industry, collective management rights, and the Collective Management Organizations represented by IFRRO. The crisis had also demonstrated the resilience of the creative industries in finding new ways to give access to works, by using the full potential of digital technologies. In this new environment, the Representative renewed its commitment to work with WIPO and Member States to foster an ecosystem in which creative works would be accessed and in which creators and publishers would be rewarded each time their works are used.

136. The Representative of the International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC) described IIPCC as an NGO promoting economic prosperity for innovators, entrepreneurs and enterprises through the commercialization and democratization of trade secrets. The IIPCC had collaborated with WIPO since 2015, when it launched the International Knowledge Registry. MSMEs had secured more than ten million international knowledge registry records by combining a unique digital fingerprint and time stamp for their trade secrets, to provide proof of their existence. Given that 80 to 95 per cent of economic activity was attributable to MSMEs, the Representative stressed the importance of encouraging innovation and IP protection.

137. The Representative of the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) said JIPA was looking forward to working on the initiatives of the new Director General during his upcoming WIPO mandate. JIPA, a non-profit organization with over 1,300 companies and organizations, had collaborated with WIPO in various activities, including WIPO GREEN, which had been based on a JIPA proposal. The Representative reaffirmed JIPA's commitment to cooperate on challenging fields such as Data, AI and Digital Transformation (DX). The Representative encouraged the new Director General to provide strong leadership and to find the right balance with regard to all the interests involving innovation in society.

138. The Representative of Knowledge Ecology International (KEI) suggested that WIPO establish an instrument creating reciprocal rights in government-funded COVID-19 inventions, with States parties agreeing to the terms and modalities for sharing access to publicly funded inventions. The Representative suggested that WIPO provide useful and timely advice to countries struggling to address IP barriers in the development and expanded manufacturing of – and access to – new services and products to prevent and treat COVID-19 and related illnesses. The new COVID-19 IP tracker was a start but more could be done. The issue should be addressed in scaling manufacturing capacity and providing affordable access to all relevant technologies. WIPO had not conducted analyses of the economic impact of the proposed new broadcasting treaty on the distribution of income between artists, performers and the public on the one hand, and owners of broadcasting organizations on the other – or on the waste associated with orphaned creative works or the transaction costs of consolidating rights and reducing access to such works.

139. The Director General expressed his gratitude to all the delegations who had commented so favorably on his 12 years of service to the Organization, emphasizing that the achievements made had been first and foremost the result of the essential and collective efforts from Member States. Indeed, the Organization belonged to Member States. The collaborative spirit within the Secretariat and across the Organization had also been vital to its achievements. The development dimension had been mainstreamed across all of the sectors of the Organization as a result of the significant and constant cooperation between the regional WIPO development bureaus and all the other sectors of the Organization, through yearly work planning exercises which were continuously monitored. Collaboration involving various sectors was extremely important in the very complex global context at hand. He was confident that the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang, would take the Organization forward with great aplomb. Going forward, the Organization would no doubt take on board the salient points from the many interesting comments made by delegations. It was evident, for example, that the Organization's increasing focus on newer technologies, particularly AI, was appreciated, and delegations had also underscored that it was vital to address the needs of developing and LDCs, as well as of countries in transition. Those and other aspects would no doubt be nurtured under WIPO's new leadership going forward in the coming years.

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