

## **WIPO General Assembly**

**Forty-Eighth (26<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary) Session**  
**Geneva, October 3 to 11, 2016**

ELECTION CYCLE FOR THE CHAIR OF THE WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*Document prepared by the Secretariat*

On September 30, 2016, a communication was received from the Republic of Latvia requesting the issuance of a revised version of document WO/GA/48/14 entitled “Election Cycle for the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly”. A copy of the said communication is reproduced in the Annex to this document.

[Annex follows]



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA

Note No. 2.3.3. – 167

Geneva, 30 September 2016

Honorable Director General,

With reference to the Agenda item 8 entitled “New electoral cycle of the WIPO General Assembly Officers” of the 56th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO which was included therein based on the request of my delegation, I respectfully ask to issue a revision of the document WO/GA/14 and replace the current document with the revised Explanatory note and draft Decision which is attached to this letter.

Please accept, Director General, assurances of my highest esteem.



Jānis Karklins  
Ambassador of Latvia

Dr Francis Gurry  
Director General  
World Intellectual Property Organization  
34, chemin des Colombettes  
CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

## Election of the officers of WIPO General Assembly

The effectiveness of any meeting largely depends on the ability of the Chair to moderate the conversation leading to conclusions or results. If a Chair is not fully knowledgeable of the topic or is unfamiliar with the dynamic in the room/event/organization, the result may not be guaranteed or might be far from optimal.

Observing the work of the WIPO General Assembly one can acknowledge the complexity of both the organization of these meetings and the issues addressed. Multiple work streams of different Unions, complex negotiations, divergent priorities of different groups of member states, linkages between issues and “disruptive innovation” of intellectual property protection systems by new information and communication technologies requires a good grasp of the complex landscape and knowledge of the topic. Diplomats specializing in WIPO work usually have to devote their attention to several international organizations based in Geneva. Some of them follow WTO and/or others UN issues. Ambassadors have even more fragmented knowledge about WIPO.

The Chair of the WIPO General Assembly usually is chosen from ambassadors covering WIPO at the beginning of the ordinary General Assembly session where WIPO’s biennial Program of Work and budget are discussed and adopted. That means that the newly elected Chairperson is immediately confronted with the full range of complex WIPO issues, including substantive, organizational and diplomatic ones. The candidate should be very well prepared in order to be effective in managing and guiding the work of WIPO General Assembly.

Looking back in the history of the Organization, we can identify very good examples of effective leadership. But we also have experienced rather chaotic Assemblies with few outcomes.

In order to strengthen intergovernmental process at WIPO and minimize a possibility of inefficiency of the General Assembly, election of a knowledgeable Chair is an important element. Experience might be a criterion for choosing the Chair. Equally, experience might be acquired over a period of time working closely with delegations and the International Bureau. That is possible, if the new Chair of General Assembly is elected not at the beginning of the ordinary Assembly session but at the end. In that case the elected Chair can prepare his/her ordinary Assembly and the most important meeting of the tenure is not at the beginning but at the end of the mandate.

Of course, there is a need to establish a transitional period that would allow to move to a different electoral cycle of the Chair and two Vice-Chairs. This can be done in a different ways: by extending the mandate of the current officers for one General Assembly meeting, by electing presiding officers for one General Assembly meeting only at the beginning of the ordinary General Assembly session, or by electing a Chair and two Vice – Chairs for two years but three meetings. Each of these options has its advantages and disadvantages.

Based on the considerations above and taking into account results of two rounds of informal consultations with interested member states conducted by the Permanent Mission of Latvia, the General Assembly may wish to take the following decision:

*In order to enhance the intergovernmental process and improve preparation of the WIPO General Assembly meetings the General Assembly decided:*

- 1. To modify the election cycle of WIPO General Assembly officers (the Chair and two Vice-Chairs) such that their term of office begins at the end of the WIPO ordinary General Assembly session.*
- 2. To initiate informal consultations facilitated by the WIPO General Assembly Chair or his designate on necessary transitional and procedural modalities of implementation of the abovementioned decision with a view to their adoption during the 2017 WIPO General Assembly.*



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA

Note No. 2.3.3. – 122

Geneva, 12 July 2016

*Dear Francis,*

Honorable Director General,

Hereby I respectfully request inclusion of the new agenda item entitled “New electoral cycle of the WIPO General Assembly Officers” in the Agenda of the 56<sup>th</sup> Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO.

The explanatory note containing the draft Decision is attached.

Please accept, Director General, assurances of my highest esteem.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JK' with a large flourish.

Janis Karklins  
Ambassador of Latvia

Dr Francis Gurry  
Director General  
World Intellectual Property Organization  
34, chemin des Colombettes  
CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

[End of Annex and of document]