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INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND GENETIC RESOURCES, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FOLKLORE

Ninth Session
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ADDENDUM TO ACCREDITATION OF CERTAIN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Document prepared by the Secretariat

1. The Annex to document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/9/2, entitled “Accreditation of Certain Non-Governmental Organizations”, lists a number of non-governmental organizations which requested, before March 3, 2006, to be granted observer status in sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, according to the Rules of Procedure.

2. The Annex to the present document lists an additional organization, which has also requested observer status.

3. The Intergovernmental Committee is invited to approve the representation in sessions of the Committee of the organization referred to in the Annex to this document, together with the organizations listed in the Annex to document WIPO/GRTKF/IC/9/2, entitled “Accreditation of Certain Non-Governmental Organizations”.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS REQUESTED
REPRESENTATION AS OBSERVER IN SESSIONS OF
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

Coordination des ONG africaines des droits de l'homme (CONGAF)/
Coordination of African Human Rights NGOs

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Main objectives of the Organization:

Established in June 1998 in Geneva, CONGAF is a pan-African and international organization which aims to promote a culture of peace and the right to development in Africa. In this respect, it forms a link between African NGOs in Africa and groups within the African diaspora in Europe and America. As an on-the-spot player, *its goal is to unify African NGOs and the sectors of civil society which they represent, for a better contribution to sustainable development in Africa.* To achieve this goal, CONGAF advocates and supports the following initiatives in order for Africa to be enhanced in all international arenas: reversing the African brain drain and the diaspora, and their involvement in the continent's development; African integration and promoting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a major program for African reconstruction; the Agenda for the Development of Africa; the Strategic Plan of the Commission of the African Union; traditional African knowledge; the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) based on sharing, the solidarity for peace contract, equal opportunities and security for sustainable development; the action plan of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban Conference); safeguarding the environment; and promoting and protecting human rights and health. CONGAF therefore tries to encourage discussion and action on these priorities.

CONGAF's mission, over the course of the next decade, will consist in reconciling relations between State and non-State actors by allowing new ideas to blossom, to the extent of transforming the current system of thought. From a "market of the poor" on "the margins of the world", we need to ensure that the importance of intellectual property, genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore is well understood, to avoid Africa — an enormous supplier of raw materials — remaining trapped in its clichés and becoming yet another dumping ground for obsolete technologies, its riches all sold for a song, in the midst of growing poverty among its peoples. CONGAF therefore needs to follow the noble path of promoting cultural diversity.

Main activities of the Organization:

CONGAF's aim, among other things, is to establish the foundations based on expertise throughout Europe for the holding of the first meeting of the diaspora and to stimulate the impact of African capital in the sustainable development of Africa.

Since its creation, CONGAF has undertaken important activities to increase the visibility of the contribution of African NGOs to promoting and protecting human rights, the right to development, and social, economic and cultural rights in Africa. In particular:

1. It has organized several round tables and conferences, in Geneva and Africa, on the fight against poverty, the African experience of fighting against terrorism, the culture of

peace, the right to health and the fight against the AIDS pandemic, promoting African oral traditions and traditional medicine, and the fight against the insidious intellectual legitimization of racism;

2. CONGAF in the Democratic Republic of Congo *called for a ceasefire* in that country (August 1998);
3. Human rights, peace and sustainable development (Listening and information sessions within Africa): Participation *inter alia* in the conference *Development through knowledge? Return to a knowledge-based economy and world society*, IUED-IRD (ORSTOM), Geneva, November 2002. Topic of presentation: “A different look at knowledge”.
4. Contribution to consultations between *UNCTAD and civil society* in Geneva (October 2002 and November 2003). Two relevant reports have been drafted on this subject.
 - Participation in sessions of the Sub-Commission of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, various working groups on the right to development, sessions of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Committee on Civil and Political Rights, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
 - Participation in the United Nations Working Group on People of African Descent;
 - Participation in and contribution to ordinary and special sessions on the *inalienable rights of the Palestinian people* under the auspices of the United Nations and civil society;
5. Diaspora, African descendants and reversing the brain drain.

Relationship of the Organization with Intellectual Property matters:

CONGAF would like to collaborate closely with the Intergovernmental Committee in order to adopt the relevant mechanisms which the Committee has devised with a view to stimulating its activities and direct impact, as civil society in the preservation and promotion of traditional African knowledge. Within the Committee’s vast sphere of activity and discussion, CONGAF feels it is essential to promote the popularization of its activities and recommendations in those sectors judged to be priorities by States and peoples in the South, such as research, health, education and awareness raising of the rights of rural communities, traditional cultures, support for rural subsistence economies, and paying fair prices for basic products.

Collaboration would have another, no less important, advantage: it would strengthen measures to combat the plundering of Africa’s natural and artistic resources. We wish to support initiatives consisting in developing real international solidarity between the players from North and South. We need to act in such a way that solidarity in intellectual property is actually seen as an ethic, above all, and that intellectual property rights serve humanity.

Using the know-how and relevance of State and non-State actors, from both North and South, we wish to contribute to collective enrichment by identifying the fundamental needs

and essential priorities of developing countries, particularly in Africa, which are essential for them to reach their full potential. Sharing knowledge and resources is essential for this purpose, as only profound solidarity and real interdependence between nations and peoples will allow their needs to be properly understood and fulfilled.

CONGAF, as a future partner of the Committee, intends to recreate the *palaver tree*, where the Council of the Wise and Uninitiated will come together to provide a forum for the enlightenment that is essential in order to:

- strengthen the rights of creators and communities, while respecting cultural diversity;
- stimulate and/or create links between research centres and African universities; and
- directly involve civil society in the preservation and promotion of African traditional knowledge.

Countries in which the Organization is primarily active:

CONGAF operates in more than 30 African countries and is represented in certain regions by national or central associations and organizations. CONGAF is currently active in the five cultural and geographical areas of Africa (West Africa, North Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa).

Additional Information

Since its creation, CONGAF has fought for a fairer international system, in the spirit of a number of resolutions adopted by international bodies and actions taken by organizations such as WIPO, and its Committee in particular.

As is the case with African NGOs, CONGAF also wishes to see *local support mechanisms* based on the old values and realities being strengthened in Africa. This topic has been the subject of discussion and salient proposals, which have been formalized in its *Memorandum on the causes of the weakening of African societies and their remedies*. We once again reiterate the idea that “the development of the resources of populations and respect for the individual and for national communities, as well as peaceful coexistence, have historically been guaranteed by local support mechanisms employing all endogenous human, material and cultural resources. Today, these mechanisms still play an important but too often ignored role: village and district associations, councils of elders, women’s associations, agricultural and fishing cooperatives, experts in local knowledge, masters of storytelling and griots, associations of traditional medicine practitioners, etc. African NGOs, close to their people and having more direct and less bureaucratic relations with them than State structures, can help to strengthen these mechanisms and thus revitalize Africa”.

The prevailing situation in the majority of African countries as regards traditional knowledge, genetic resources and biotechnology requires significant actions to promote these local mechanisms, in order to re-establish the old balances which populations benefited from. This would help to compensate for the economic, cultural, environmental and political

weakening of African populations and States, and their capacity to fulfil their fundamental needs and manage their natural wealth.

In partnership with the Committee, CONGAF can rely on local mechanisms by encouraging traditional technology for the rehabilitation and preservation of ecosystems, and on research and actions to halt migratory trends and slow down the brain drain to the countries of the North.

CONGAF has launched several appeals in this area and wishes to cooperate actively in the enhancement of Africa's resources and production. In the face of the impoverishment of African peoples, CONGAF wants to renew the efforts to strengthen local mechanisms and enhance local expertise, so as to broaden the vision and the decisions of the Committee, and the many remedies which necessitate a new way of thinking, to take into account the local social and political players working on the ground.

CONGAF's participation in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee, and WIPO in general, could lead to enlightened proposals and bring honour to the Committee, WIPO and Africa.

CONGAF is organizing an exhibition at WIPO on African Traditional Knowledge "Rehabilitation of Art, Craft and African culture" to be held in May-June 2006 in Geneva.

Full Contact Information:

Coordination des ONG africaines
des droits de l'homme (CONGAF)
Case postale 127
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: (+41) 78 610 13 48
Fax: (+41) 22/788 56 71
Email: congaf@hotmail.com
sdjely@yahoo.fr

Organization Representative:

Mr. Djély-Karifa Samoura, President.

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