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 31st 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 30th 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 theAssociation 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 outdatedIndustrial 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 54th 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 18th 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 though 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](https://www.wipo.int/members/en/details.jsp?country_id=44) 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 5th Plenary Meeting of the 7th 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 ofFinland, 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 31st 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. TheDelegation 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 32nd 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. Regretfully, 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 59th 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 43rd 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 60th 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 (IPOPHL) 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. IPOPHL 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, IPOPHL 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 administrating 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 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 21st 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 42nd 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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