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# Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

**Sixty-First Series of Meetings**

**Geneva, September 21 to 25, 2020**

general report

*adopted by the Assemblies*

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# INTRODUCTION

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

(1) WIPO General Assembly, fifty-third (29th Extraordinary) session

(2) WIPO Conference, forty-first (17th Extraordinary) session

(3) WIPO Coordination Committee, seventy-eighth (51st ordinary) session

(4) Paris Union Assembly, fifty-sixth (32nd Extraordinary) session

(5) Paris Union Executive Committee, sixtieth (56th ordinary) session

(6) Berne Union Assembly, fiftieth (26th Extraordinary) session

(7) Berne Union Executive Committee, sixty-sixth (51st ordinary) session

(8) Madrid Union Assembly, fifty-fourth (31st Extraordinary) session

(9) Hague Union Assembly, fortieth (18th Extraordinary) session

(10) Nice Union Assembly, fortieth (16th Extraordinary) session

(11) Lisbon Union Assembly, thirty-seventh (14th Extraordinary) session

(12) Locarno Union Assembly, fortieth (17th Extraordinary) session

(13) IPC [International Patent Classification] Union Assembly, forty-first (19th Extraordinary) session

(14) PCT [Patent Cooperation Treaty] Union Assembly, fifty‑second (30th Extraordinary) session

(15) Budapest Union Assembly, thirty-seventh (17th Extraordinary) session

(16) Vienna Union Assembly, thirty‑third (15th Extraordinary) session

(17) WCT [WIPO Copyright Treaty] Assembly, twentieth (11th Extraordinary) session

(18) WPPT [WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty] Assembly, twentieth (11th Extraordinary) session

(19) PLT [Patent Law Treaty] Assembly, nineteenth (11th Extraordinary) session

(20) Singapore Treaty [Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks] Assembly, thirteenth (7th Extraordinary) session.

(21) Marrakesh Treaty [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled] Assembly, fifth (5th ordinary) session.

(22) BTAP [Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances] Assembly, first (1st ordinary) session

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

1. In addition to this General Report, separate Reports have been drawn up on the sessions of the WIPO General Assembly (WO/GA/53/9), WIPO Coordination Committee (WO/CC/78/5), Paris Union Assembly (P/A/56/2), Madrid Union Assembly (MM/A/54/2), Hague Union Assembly (H/A/40/2), Marrakesh Treaty Assembly (MVT/A/5/2) and Beijing Treaty Assembly (BTAP/A/3). Furthermore, consolidated reports of the sessions of the other bodies have also been drawn up, as follows: WIPO Conference (WO/CF/41/1), Paris Union Executive Committee (P/EC/60/1), Berne Union Assembly (B/A/50/1), Berne Union Executive Committee (B/EC/66/1), Nice Union Assembly (N/A/40/1), Lisbon Union Assembly (LI/A/37/1), Locarno Union Assembly (LO/A/40/1), IPC Union Assembly (IPC/A/42/1), PCT Union Assembly (PCT/A/52/1), Budapest Union Assembly (BP/A/37/1), Vienna Union Assembly (VA/A/33/1), WIPO Copyright Treaty Assembly (WCT/A/20/1), WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty Assembly (WPPT/A/20/1), Patent Law Treaty Assembly (PLT/A/19/1) and the Singapore Treaty Assembly (STLT/A/13/1).
2. The list of the members and observers of the Assemblies, as of September 21, 2020, is set forth in document A/61/INF/1 Rev.
3. The meetings dealing with the following items of the Agenda (document A/61/1) were presided over by the following Chairs:

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

| Item 17 | Yan Xiaohong (Mr.) (China), Chair of the Beijing Treaty Assembly |
| --- | --- |

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

## ITEM 1 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA OPENING OF THE SESSIONS

1. The Sixty-First Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO was convened by the Director General of WIPO, Mr. Francis Gurry.
2. The sessions were opened in a joint meeting of all the 22 Assemblies and other bodies concerned by Ambassador Omar Zniber (Mr.) (Morocco), Chair of the WIPO General Assembly.
3. The opening statement of the Chair is recorded as follows:

“Mr. Francis Gurry,

“Mr. Daren Tang,

“Your Excellencies,

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Heads of Delegations

“Dear colleagues,

“Members of the Secretariat

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

“I was elected to Chair the General Assembly a year ago and I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate my thanks to all our Member States for the trust that they have put in the Kingdom of Morocco. We are the first Arab state and the second African state to enjoy this privilege since WIPO was created. And I also wish to say that we wanted to take on this role in order to contribute to the strengthening of multilateral work because we are convinced that multilateral work is key for Moroccan diplomacy, both in terms of designing policy and implementing it. This is the best way of facing social and health challenges, and indeed the scientific challenges we face, which are the very forefront of the work of this Organization.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you.”

## ITEM 2 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

## ITEM 3 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Discussions were based on document A/61/INF/1 Rev.
2. Introducing the agenda item, the Legal Counsel announced that the only officers to be elected were one Chair and two Vice-Chairs for each of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Paris Union Executive Committee, the Berne Union Executive Committee and the Assembly of the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances. He recalled that in the current year, with respect to the officers of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Chair and the second Vice‑Chair should be elected from among the delegates of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee of the Paris Union and the first Vice-Chair from among the delegates of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee of the Berne Union, in accordance with Rule 3(2)(a) of the Special Rules of Procedures of the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Legal Counsel also announced that the Beijing Treaty Assembly would hold its inaugural session following the entry into force of the Beijing Treaty on April 28, 2020. As the WIPO General Assembly, as well as the other Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO were meeting in extraordinary sessions in 2020, the officers presiding over them were serving the second year of their respective terms of office. In order to allow the election of the officers of the Beijing Treaty Assembly to follow the same cycle as that of the other Assemblies, the Rules of Procedures proposed to be adopted by the Beijing Treaty Assembly foresaw that for the inaugural session the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Beijing Treaty Assembly be elected, exceptionally, for a period of one year, up to but not including the next ordinary session in 2021. As of 2021 and consistently thereafter, the terms of office for the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Beijing Treaty Assembly would be two years, thus putting the election of officers for the Beijing Treaty Assembly in full alignment with other bodies in WIPO. He pointed out that, as usual, the officers of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Paris Union Executive Committee, and the Berne Union Executive Committee were appointed to a one-year term. He then announced that following informal consultations among Group Coordinators and, pending further consultations among delegations on the remaining vacant officer positions, consensus had been reached to elect the following officers: the Chair and the two Vice‑Chairs of the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Chair of the Berne Union Executive Committee, as well as the Chair and the first Vice‑Chair of the Beijing Treaty Assembly. He encouraged the delegations to continue consultations on the still vacant officer positions and revert accordingly.
3. Commenting on the agenda item, the Chair said that as indicated by the Legal Counsel, there was consensus among delegations on the nominations as read out by him. The Chair observed that while more nominations and consultations were required for the remaining vacant positions for officers, he proposed that Member States endorse those nominations on which consensus had been reached. He therefore asked delegations, in the meantime, to continue with the consultations on the remaining nominations and inform the Legal Counsel accordingly.
4. As there was no objection, the Chair gaveled the elected officers and announced that the meeting would revert to the agenda item at a later stage.
5. Reverting to the agenda item, the Legal Counsel confirmed that Member States had reached consensus on the election of the Chair of the Paris Union Executive Committee.
6. The following officers were elected:

WIPO Coordination Committee

Chair: Zsuzsanna Horváth (Ms.) (Hungary)

Vice-Chair: Alfredo Suescum (Mr.) (Panama)

Vice-Chair: Mercy Kainobwisho (Ms.) (Uganda)

Paris Union Executive Committee

Chair: Martín Correa (Mr.) (Chile)

Berne Union Executive Committee

Chair: Amina Smaila (Ms.) (Nigeria)

Beijing Treaty Assembly

Chair: Yan Xiaohong (Mr.) (China)

Vice-Chair: Diana Hasbun (Ms.) (El Salvador)

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

## ITEM 4 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO THE ASSEMBLIES OF WIPO

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

“Your Excellency Ambassador Omar Zniber, Chair, WIPO General Assembly,

“Mr. Daren Tang, Director General-Elect,

“Your Excellencies the Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors,

“Distinguished Delegates,

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

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

“I am delighted that the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang, has joined us for the opening session. As you all know, Daren Tang takes over as Director General next week, after months of dedicated preparation since his appointment in May. I wish him every success in his tenure, which I am sure will be an outstanding one that leads the Organization forward in every way.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“We are all aware that the appetite or the capacity for such multilateral action is regrettably diminished at the moment. The reconstruction of this appetite or capacity, with the inevitable changes in architecture that it may entail, is one of the major challenges that confronts the world in the coming years and decades. I am not going to enter into the exceptionally complex task that such a reconstruction involves. Suffice it to say that the task is a long and difficult one and that the risks of failure take us into unknown and perilous waters. It involves almost every dimension of policy, including security, personal and political freedoms, market and competition supervision, tax authority, the integrity of information and data and the conduct of social and cultural life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The Chair of the General Assembly,

“His Excellency Ambassador Omar Zniber,

“The Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry,

“Excellencies,

“Distinguished Delegates,

“Colleagues,

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ITEM 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA GENERAL STATEMENTS

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

## ITEM 6 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

1. Discussions were based on document A/61/3.
2. The Chair informed that he was conducting consultations with Regional Coordinators on this agenda item, and proposed to return to it later on.
3. On reopening the agenda item, the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document A/61/3, and recalled that the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO were invited to consider applications by one intergovernmental organization (IGO), seven international non‑governmental organizations (NGOs) and four national NGOs, as listed in paragraph 4 of the said document, for observer status in the meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO. The Legal Counsel pointed out that, in respect of the four national NGOs, and in conformity with the principles applicable to national NGOs that had been adopted by Member States, the Secretariat had consulted with the Member States from which the NGOs originated prior to the submission of the requests to these Assemblies. In that regard, the Legal Counsel confirmed that the necessary agreement had been received in respect of all of the four applications concerned.
4. The Delegation of China thanked the Chair and relevant parties for conducting meaningful informal consultations with its Delegation in the last two days. It stated that with regard to one of the international NGO applications for observer status in WIPO, its Delegation appreciated the constructive consultations. The Delegation requested the Assembly to suspend its discussion with respect to the request for observer status by the Wikimedia Foundation (WMF) to WIPO. It pointed out that according to the admission criteria and procedures for obtaining observer status at WIPO, an international NGO should submit a complete list and total number of its national groups or members, showing their country of origin. China noted that in its application documents for observer status, WMF declared that it did not have member organizations but 124 user groups, 39 geographic chapters and two thematic organizations with which it was affiliated. Nevertheless, in accordance with their Wikipedia page, WMF began recognizing chapters and thematic organizations in 2004. If the recognition of a chapter and thematic organization is approved by the Foundation's board, a chapter agreement or Wikimedia thematic organization agreement is signed. As of October 2015, this Foundation had 41 recognized chapters and thematic organizations, one of which was Wikimedia Taiwan, established in Taiwan Province of China. The description of WMF on the Wikimedia website was evidently inconsistent with the application documents submitted by the Foundation to the Assembly for its consideration, and further clarification was thus required. At the same time, China had spotted a large amount of content and disinformation in violation of the one‑China principle on the affiliated websites of the Foundation, which contradicted UNGA Resolution 2758 and the consistent position of WIPO on Taiwan‑related issues. The Delegation expressed serious concerns over that practice. There was reason to believe that this Foundation had been carrying out political activities through its member organizations, which could undermine the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, it was not fitting for the Foundation to serve as an observer in this professional Organization. The Delegation emphasized that the agenda of the present session had been condensed due to the special circumstances under which the Assemblies were held. Complicated agenda items that required extensive consultations were generally not included. The Delegation welcomed that arrangement, hoping that the same principle could be adhered to during the discussion of all agenda items during the current session. The Delegation recalled further that the Organization, while discussing and making decisions on different agenda items, had always upheld the principle of consensus, including in respect of the discussion of observer status in the past. The Delegation noted that this principle had been applied in the past. Therefore, the Delegation wished to request the Assemblies of WIPO to suspend the discussion on the application of the Foundation for admission to WIPO as an observer, so that the Foundation could further clarify questions regarding the Foundation’s member organizations and Taiwan‑related positions.
5. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/61/3 and stated that it was prepared to approve all the requests therein. Paragraph 4 of the document set out all requests for observer status that had been received, and contained the requisite information. According to the Group’s understanding, that information was meant to enable the consideration and subsequent granting of observer status. The Group understood that the published requests had complied with all proper procedures. Furthermore, the Group understood that all of the organizations listed in the working document met the admission criteria and procedures for applying for observer status at WIPO, as requested by WIPO on its website, otherwise the Secretariat would not have published their applications. The Group said that should that not have been the case, it would ask for clarity from the Legal Counsel on the issue. The Group noted that observer organizations bring technical expertise and insight to the bodies of WIPO. It has been a common practice at WIPO to welcome the involvement of a diversity of NGOs, IGOs, industry groups and other stakeholders as widely as possible in consultation processes and discussions regarding current IP issues. This has been part and parcel of the transparency and inclusiveness Group B cherished in WIPO. Group B was unaware of any information that would lead them to believe that any of the organizations listed in the document would not be able to bring valuable contributions to the deliberations on current IP issues. The Group therefore urged the approval of the full list of requests for observer status as contained in document A/61/3 before the Assemblies.
6. The Delegation of Pakistan said that it believed that the reservations raised by the Delegation of China should receive attention and it was important to have more information regarding the procedure and the application process. The Delegation stated that, given the unique COVID‑related situation and the fact that there was no consensus on the issue, its request would be that the decision on this agenda item, with regard to one particular NGO, be deferred.
7. The Delegation of the United States of America expressed its support to the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom, on behalf of Group B, and for the full list of observer applications appearing in document A/61/3. In its view, all applicant organizations listed met the requirements requested by WIPO, otherwise the Secretariat would not have published their applications. The Delegation expressed concern that a last-minute question about the observer list did not allow potential observers the ability to respond to misunderstandings about their application. On the application of the Wikimedia Foundation, specifically, the Delegation noted that the international NGO was similar to many other NGOs that had views on copyright‑related issues and had already been accepted as WIPO observers. The applicant had already demonstrated its interest in the field of IP and its link to WIPO's work, for example, it had submitted input to the WIPO conversation on artificial intelligence (AI) and IP in response to the call for public input. The Foundation also used the WIPO arbitration and mediation services frequently. The Delegation pointed out that observers were meant to enrich debates and bring views that link to, and support, the activities and objectives of WIPO. The Delegation remarked that it had no information to believe that the applicant would not be able to contribute to meetings, consultations, and debates about current IP issues. The Delegation therefore urged the approval of the organizations listed in document A/61/3 at this session. However, if there was an agreement to simply defer consideration of the NGO’s admission, the Delegation would accept that approach. The Delegation pointed out that evaluating an international NGO's credentials for observer status in WIPO was not a one-China issue. The Wikimedia Foundation's participation did not raise any questions about the political status of any other Member States. Allowing the Wikimedia Foundation to participate, as an observer, would be entirely consistent with the established precedent at WIPO of supporting other existing observers and Member States that also have some affiliation with Taiwan. For example, the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Law Association, the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, just to name a few. The Delegation believed that Wikimedia Foundation’s observer status should be decided on the merits of its application and its ability to contribute to WIPO's discussion on IP issues.
8. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) took note of the information provided in document A/61/3 which contained the applications received by the Director General from different entities to attend WIPO meetings as observers. It recalled that decisions concerning the admission of observers to the meetings of WIPO had always been made by Member States consensually. The Delegation understood the concern raised by the Delegation of China under the current situation. Since there was no consensus among Member States to grant observer status to one particular entity, its Delegation supported the proposal to postpone and defer the discussion in order to provide more time to analyze the application.
9. The Delegation of the Russian Federation observed that the issue of the admission of observers was a very technical one and pointed out that attempts had been made to resolve the issue involving consultation with Coordinators of the Regional Groups. However, it wished to recall that the procedure adopted in accordance with the established practice of the Organization did indeed allow delegations, as it was well-known, to look carefully at issues and to ensure that they did not create a precedent by doing something that would not be correct. The Delegation said that, in its view, it was not a correct precedent for the Secretariat to start doing research into the particular issue, but it was up to the Member States to take the decisions. Its Delegation was therefore willing to recognize that this was something Member States had to think about for the future. When further information would be received, then Member States might be in a position to adopt the entity as an observer. The Delegation, however, wished to emphasize that at present all decisions should be taken by consensus. The Delegation was therefore of the view that it would be appropriate to postpone the application for further consideration.
10. The Delegation of Canada expressed its support for the practical inclusion of non‑governmental organizations in relevant discussions organized by United Nations (UN) specialized agencies, including WIPO. It was of the view that the eligibility of NGOs to participate in WIPO discussions should be judged on the merits of their request.
11. The Chair took note that there was no consensus reached on the request for admission of Wikimedia Foundation as an observer, and proposed the following decision paragraph, which reflected the proposal contained in document A/61/3, with the exception of the admission of the Wikimedia Foundation, on which a decision had been postponed as consensus had not been reached.
12. The Assemblies of WIPO, each in so far as it is concerned, decided to grant observer status to the following:

(a) Intergovernmental organization:

(i) International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory (INL).

(b) International non-governmental organizations:

(i) Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC);

(ii) Brand Owners Protection Group (Gulf BPG);

(iii) Independent Alliance for Artists Rights (IAFAR);

(iv) Intellectual Property Latin American School (ELAPI);

(v) Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT); and

(vi) Women@theTable (Women at the Table).

(c) National non-governmental organizations:

(i) French Association of Industrial and Artisanal Geographical Indications (AFIGIA);

(ii) Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACS);

(iii) Omani Association for Intellectual Property (OAIP); and

(iv) Research Center for Innovation-Supported Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (RISE).

1. Reacting to the decision on Agenda Item 6, the Delegation of the United States of America expressed its disappointment that one application for observer status had been deferred due to a last-minute question, despite the fact that the document was published two months ago, leaving adequate time for Member States to consult and provide the concerned NGOs the opportunity to correct any perceived deficiency in their applications prior to these Assemblies. The Delegation said it appreciated that Member States had agreed to a limited agenda of the Assemblies and reiterated its support for the proposed way forward, that is, to revisit the application of the Wikimedia Foundation during the next Assemblies. It strongly encouraged Member States to be more transparent and to voice their concerns in a timely manner in order to alleviate the issue raised in the session, and looked forward to the Assemblies revisiting the issue in the next session.
2. The Delegation of China expressed its appreciation for the draft decision paragraph proposed by the Chair and, at the same time, disagreed with the statement by the Delegation of the United States of America, in particular, on the issue of the one‑China policy. As referred by the Delegation of the Russian Federation, and in accordance with precedent regarding the approval procedures for requests of observer status, including the practice in 2012, Member States had the opportunity to raise their different opinions even if the Secretariat had already disseminated particular documents of some of the observers. It recalled that, at that time, as Member States were discussing the issue of one NGO on that list, one of the groups had adopted that practice. The Delegation therefore wished to remind relevant groups to be mindful of their previous practice rather than adopting double standards on the issue.

## ITEM 7 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS

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

## ITEM 8 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA CONVENING OF 2021 Extraordinary Sessions

1. Discussions were based on documents A/61/8 and A/61/8 Corr.
2. The Secretariat stated that the agenda item reflected a common commitment on the part of Member States, as well as the Secretariat, to keep the wheel moving. As soon as WIPO had recovered from the first shock of the pandemic, the message from Member States was loud and clear that an attempt should be made to bring normalcy back to the work of the Organization. The Secretariat recalled that, under the leadership of the Chair for the past six months, and under very close guidance of the Director General, the Secretariat undertook extensive and intensive discussions on the agenda for the current Assemblies. It was not an easy task to conduct these meetings given all the safety precautions. Nevertheless, under the guidance of the Chair and the Director General, safe and effective Assemblies were taking place at that stage. The Secretariat said that, during the discussions with Member States, there was a clear message from all regional groups and other Member States that the agenda items that required negotiations, and which were not necessary at this time, should not be included on the agenda. Mindful of that advice, the agenda of the Assemblies adopted the previous morning was truncated, as compared to the initial draft agenda proposed by the Director General on March 20, 2020, and based primarily on feedback received from Member States. The agenda items set aside were basically those to be taken up during an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first half of 2021. Those agenda items were listed in documents A/61/8 and A/61/8 Corr.: Records of WIPO Meetings; Report on the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR); Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP); Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT); Matters Concerning the Convening of a Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a Design Law Treaty (DLT); Report on the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) and Review of the Implementation of the Development Agenda Recommendations; Report on the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC); Report on the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS); PCT System; and Lisbon System. The Secretariat indicated that to ensure that the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to be held during the first half of 2021 would be more substantive than the current Assemblies, the Secretariat had issued a detailed calendar of meetings of its principal committees and working groups. The first meeting would take place on October 5, 2020. The Secretariat hoped that those meetings, to be conducted in the same hybrid format, would take delegations a step closer to substantive discussions and agenda items for the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly, if so agreed during these Assemblies. It went without saying that the evolving situation would be closely monitored and the pandemic borne in mind. The Secretariat stressed that everyone was making its best effort to ensure that the work of the Organization, including its normative work, continues to move on seamlessly and smoothly. The Secretariat indicated that it was with this intent, as well as the Chair’s guidance, that this agenda item was included for consideration by Member States.
3. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of the Group of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC), supported the idea of convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first quarter of 2021 to consider the issues that had not been possible to consider during this hybrid format session. On the timing, the Delegation suggested that it should not be earlier than March next year to give sufficient time to prepare for this item. With regard to issues as copyright, and issues relating to industrial designs and industrial property, the Group also believed there were a number of detailed matter that needed to be prepared. Referring to document A/61/8 and its Annex, the Delegation took note of the necessary information provided. The epidemiological situation was uncertain, but once that issue was resolved, the Delegation hoped that it would be possible to return to a traditional work format.
4. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, extended its gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/61/8. The Group was cognizant that the COVID-19 had had serious disruptive consequences on the work of WIPO. The Group appreciated the exceptional contingency measures applied by the Secretariat in suspending all Member States meetings from March 2020. With the exception of a few delegations, COVID-19 had made it impossible for delegates and experts to travel to attend meetings. The disease had also resulted in a limited resumption of work through hybrid meetings, which were part virtual and part physical. The Group had shown its determination for the work of the Organization to continue in a reasonable and realistic manner. The hybrid format posed significant challenges for members of the African Group, as the technology and digital divide often precluded fair and adequate participation of experts from capitals. The Group appealed to Member States to show flexibility and accommodation for the unique challenges faced by individual Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. The African Group acknowledged the need for convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to discuss substantive work and to try to tackle the backlog of issues under negotiations, and agreed to the principle of the decision. However, for the purposes of inclusivity, transparency and efficiency, the Group was of the view that Member States needed to be consulted, in particular, on the format and the agenda of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly, to ensure that the envisaged Assemblies was effective and to allow all Member States to participate actively and on equal footing.
5. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/61/8. While it was mindful of the health and safety considerations on the WIPO campus, and the inconvenience caused to delegates participating in sessions virtually from different time zones, the Group affirmed its commitment to resuming the substantive intergovernmental work at WIPO following the hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Keeping in mind the importance of ensuring inclusivity for capital‑based experts, Group B supported the convening of the 2021 Extraordinary Sessions as a moment to take stock as well as give direction to various WIPO substantive and normative bodies. The Group said that it was important that the momentum and good progress made in the Organization was not be compromised by the unprecedented circumstances. The Group indicated that solutions to the problems faced existed, noting that intergovernmental work in other organizations, including technical agencies, had resumed and that Chairs, delegates and secretariats were given opportunities to deliver on their duties, both physically in Geneva and virtually from capitals. The Group stated that at the PBC earlier that month, delegations were also able to come together to take decisions on a number of key issues, demonstrating that deliberation and consensus was also possible at WIPO. This showed that, even if it was not possible to know how long and how restrictive the situation would continue, delegations were on the right track and it should make delegations ready to face this new reality and model for work. The Group recalled that the purpose of the Assemblies was both to take stock of the Organization's work and to set the direction of travel. One of the priorities at present should be to focus on how to proceed and to organize work in the upcoming committees and meetings scheduled between October and February. The Group called on the membership to re-engage in substantive discussions on the issues covered by those committees and meetings. It hoped that the prospects of holding an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly would give Member States some impetus to engage in substantive work and encourage discussions beyond housekeeping matters. Given the current uncertainties, the Group proposed that a final decision on whether to hold an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was taken instead during the Extraordinary Session of the Coordination Committee expected to take place in the last months of 2020. By that time, delegations would have a clearer picture of how the Extraordinary Sessions could meet the objectives of taking stock of work and giving overall direction to its subsidiary bodies. The Group said that the resilience, creativity and flexibility of delegations would be essential to ensure WIPO could come through this unprecedented situation without losing the time, goodwill and traction gained through so much hard work over the years. The Group reaffirmed its commitment in this endeavor.
6. The Delegation of Panama, speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), joined other regional groups in acknowledging the importance of keeping the momentum of work within the Organization. The Group noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected the way in which delegations worked; such an example was the truncated agenda of these Assemblies. Given the challenges delegations were facing, which made it impossible to completely conduct their work, the Group believed that it was important to consider holding an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the future to consider the agenda items that had not been dealt with substantially at this session. The Group requested that the possible holding of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was coordinated with consultations with Member States to discuss various aspects regarding the organization, including health and safety measures, issues connected with the agenda, and the aim of guaranteeing a meeting where delegations could achieve concrete results.
7. The Delegation of El Salvador supported the statement made by the Delegation of Panama, on behalf of GRULAC. As stated in its general statement, the Delegation attached considerable importance to moving the Organization’s normative agenda forward. The Delegation was aware that the COVID-19 pandemic had made it very difficult to move forward discussions in the various WIPO Committees. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for all its efforts in proposing alternative means of participation and alternative sessions, and making use of the best technologies available, including in these current series of meetings. The Delegation recognized that it was all very new and that many delegations believed that these methods could not replace the personal interaction required to undertake certain types of discussions and negotiations. However, no-one knew how long the crisis would last and how it would evolve, as well as whether it would be possible to travel in the first part of next year to enable delegates from capitals to have face-to-face meetings. In spite of that scenario, the Delegation underscored its conviction that work of the Organization had to go forward, and therefore supported the proposal to postpone substantive discussions of items to a possible extraordinary session in the first part of 2021. The Delegation hoped that this would not be postponed again even if travel restrictions continue to be applied in the next few months. It said that delegations needed to see leadership of the Secretariat together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the different WIPO bodies and Committees, and it fully trusted the Secretariat to meet that requirement. The Delegation encouraged members to provide WIPO the support, and participate actively to facilitate the work. As previous speakers mentioned, the Delegation was also open to continue dialogue on this issue.
8. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea supported the Secretariat’s proposal on the convening of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly during the first half of 2021. Given that WIPO was the global forum for international IP services, policy information and cooperation, the Delegation believed that the physical presence of Member States would be required for the discussion of the international norm setting and global IP services. The Delegation requested that the Secretariat closely monitor the progress of COVID-19, and choose a convening date accordingly.
9. The Delegation of Chile supported the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation said that it was important to keep up the momentum of work within the Organization as pointed out by other speakers. The Delegation believed that it was important to have a window open in order to make it possible for bodies of WIPO that had not been able to submit their reports during the session to have an opportunity to do so. It pointed out the need to have a prior agreement between Member States and the Secretariat on how delegations could work to keep up the work, as well as being mindful of the risks of holding hybrid format meetings. In that regard, the Delegation believed that it was important to balance that risk, including the risk of spreading the virus for delegates and the members of the Secretariat.
10. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia supported the holding of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in 2021.
11. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Secretariat for presenting the document and for its explanation. In principle, the Delegation supported the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly to consider the situation and to bring on track the substantive discussion of work. Bearing in mind the persistent uncertainties caused by the global pandemic, the Delegation believed that there was the need to monitor the progress and the development, and to make a final decision on the dates, format and agenda items of the extraordinary sessions accordingly.
12. The Delegation of Japan supported the statement delivered by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents. The Delegation supported the convening of the 2021 Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly to discuss the remaining agenda items. However, the sessions should be carefully scheduled taking into full account the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Delegation stated that, if those sessions were convened in a hybrid format with both physical and virtual participation, virtual participants would be subject to constraints, such as time differences. The Delegation stated that in order to minimize the impact of those constraints, the time of the sessions should be reduced as much as possible. The Delegation would appreciate receiving very clear and detailed information on the policy for the sessions.
13. The Chair proposed to adopt the decision presented in document A/61/8 and corrected in document A/61/8 Corr.
14. The Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that it believed that Group B’s statement was clear about the support of the convening of the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly. However, the Delegation believed that it would be appropriate to have more clarity and information after the scheduled sessions in the autumn of that year, and that it would be a good opportunity to convene the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly at the Coordination Committee. The Delegation believed that the Convention allowed the process to take place, and that the Coordination Committee could play a role in convening or making a decision on convening the Extraordinary Sessions of the General Assembly. Furthermore, the Delegation also understood that the corrigendum that was circulated did not include some agenda items which its Group believed to be useful for discussions, namely the Madrid Union and the Hague Union. The Delegation sought the indulgence of the Secretariat to clarify the proposed decision and possibly alter the language slightly.
15. The Chair said that, to his knowledge, the procedures concerning the convening of an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly was in principle decided by the Member States, then it was up to the Director General and the Chair to convene an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly four months in advance before 2021. The Chair stated that given the circumstances described by delegations, Member States would be consulted before convening an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly. The Chair noted that the request was to formalize such a decision within the body of the Organization and, to his knowledge, it was not a precondition in the Rules of the Organization. However, it was up to the Member States to decide on those issues. The Chair requested the Legal Counsel to elaborate on those aspects.
16. The Legal Counsel confirmed that the WIPO Convention sets out the process to be followed for the convocation of the Extraordinary General Assembly. He referred delegations to Article 6.4(b), which sets out that the General Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session upon convocation by the Director General either at the request of the Coordination Committee or at the request of one fourth of the States members of the General Assembly. The Legal Counsel indicated that the basis for the document that was currently on the agenda was found in the second part of the provision, and that similar provisions were found in treaties with respect to other assemblies. Furthermore, he stated that if the decision would be adopted, then the legal requirements necessary for the convocation by the Director General would be fulfilled. The Legal Counsel stated that those requirements were set out in the General Rules of Procedure, Rules 3 and 4.
17. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Legal Counsel and the Chair for their explanations. The Group requested more time to consider the decision due to the fact that the decision language cited the corrigendum which was circulated the previous day. Although it was a simple corrigendum, the Group needed to consult its capitals and make sure that it does not alter the notion of the decision itself. The Group said it would appreciate a bit more time to consider the suggested language.
18. The Chair requested the Delegation of the United Kingdom to revert with its Group’s answer at the beginning of the afternoon session.
19. The Delegation said it would try its best to get an answer.
20. The Secretariat clarified that this was an indicative agenda and was not cast in stone. The Secretariat said that in the corrected document the Hague Union was only removed because the Hague Union was being considered in this session. The Secretariat recalled that a provisional agenda was issued by the Director General in March and a truncated agenda was issued later. After the September 4th meeting it was decided to include the Madrid Union and the Hague Union to the agenda of this session. The Chair pointed out that the Hague Union was removed the previous day because the Hague Union was to be considered in this session. Hence, it was the provisional minus the truncated. Nevertheless, as stated by all delegations, it was extremely clear that each and every agenda item that would ultimately feature for the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly would be in consultation with Member States. The Secretariat reiterated that it was only indicative, as done for ordinary sessions. The document for the ordinary sessions indicates four agenda items such as Admission of Observers, Election of Officers etc., therefore the Secretariat did not see the need to hold back a decision for this technical reason.
21. The Chair shared the view of the Secretariat’s statement and recalled that discussions were held on this point that morning, and other delegations had requested to be consulted on the agenda of the extraordinary session. The Chair asked the Group if it was satisfied with the Secretariat’s explanations to enable the meeting to formalize the decision immediately instead of the afternoon.
22. The Delegation of the Russian Federation said that it had requested the floor earlier before hearing the exhaustive explanations of the Chair, the Legal Counsel and the Secretariat. The Delegation stated that it was entirely satisfied with the explanations, and recommended to adopt the draft decision as previously submitted. The Delegation said that if there was any new proposal, it would certainly have to consider that very carefully. However, if any new proposals were put forward, they should first be shared with regional coordinators.
23. The Delegation of the United Kingdom said that it did not want to take anybody’s rights away and in the least for itself. The Delegation thanked the Chair for the clarifications. The Delegation stated that it was sufficiently convinced. However, fortunately or unfortunately, it was not the sole decision maker in the UN system, let alone Group B. In that regard, it would like to have clarification before it engaged with its Group and capital. The Delegation understood that the decision read out was a decision to convene. While the Delegation understood that the basis of the agenda was indicative, the decision to convene was a difficult decision. The Delegation asked whether that decision bounds the Organization or the Director General to convene the Extraordinary General Assembly or if it was also indicative. If in a couple of months, delegations decided that it should be convened later or in a different format, would delegations still be able to alter that scenario, and was the decision binding?
24. The Chair recalled that as expressed by everybody it would be governed by the conditions towards the pandemic. The Chair said that delegations express its strong will to convene an Extraordinary General Assembly in this session and to take a decision. The Chair recalled that the Secretariat had announced the meetings to be held as of the following week, paving the way for all to work. The Chair noted that all delegations who contributed to the dialogue expressed this strong will, including the Delegation of the United Kingdom, to tackle the substantive issues at hand. That was the Chair’s understanding, and he did not wish to give a sole understanding. However, his understanding of this decision was to obtain the consensus of all. The Chair stressed that the Extraordinary General Assembly would be held with an agenda that would be discussed before being formally adopted, under the conditions of the rules of the host State and the Secretariat. The Chair asked the Delegation of the United Kingdom whether he wished to consult its Group or whether the explanations provided by the Legal Counsel, the Secretariat and himself were sufficient.
25. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B announced that Group B would meet in the afternoon.
26. The Delegation of Chile said it was persuaded by the language proposed by the Chair, and it had the same understanding that had been confirmed by Secretariat and the Chair. In the hope to swiftly resolving the situation, the Delegation suggested that the decision language could refer to consultations with Member States to reassure the Delegation of the United Kingdom.
27. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Chile for its contribution and for stating its understanding. The Chair stated that the Organization was guided by consensus and he believed that there was consensus but that the decision was important. The Chair recalled the importance of expressing the strong will and the need to maintain the trend of the Organization, which was highly stressed at the start of the debate.
28. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, pointed out that the Annex mentioned “items to be included” and that this may result in some misinterpretation. In an effort to move the discussion forward, the Delegation suggested that the decision could read “that items that could be considered in the draft Consolidated Agenda”.
29. The Chair adjourned the meeting.
30. On reopening the agenda item, the Chair recalled that some observations were made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B, on the decision proposed for adoption on the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly.
31. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, expressed its deepest appreciation to the Chair for allowing its Group more time to consult on the proposed draft decision, which differed to the one in document A/61/8 by a margin. The Delegation stated that it wanted to seek comfort with the Group or its ability to accept. In those consultations, the Group tried to bring as little change as possible to the draft proposed in the morning, and the Group arrived in capturing the discussion within discussion in the morning. The proposed decision read as follows, “The Assemblies of WIPO each as far as it is concerned request the Director General of WIPO to convene Extraordinary Sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on agenda including but not limited to items contained in document A/61/8”. The Delegation indicated that two changes made were the insertion of the words “but not limited to” to show clearly that there could be some changes. Another suggested change to the language was to refer to the original document and not to the corrigendum circulated the previous day. The Delegation informed that the draft was shared with other groups in the last 25 minutes ago, and therefore, it sought the views of the colleagues in the meeting or if the Chair would allow discussions to take place outside of the meeting.
32. The Chair thanked the Delegation of the United Kingdom for its declaration and proposals. As mentioned by the Delegation that those proposals were limited in form, the Chair preferred to have the first reactions in the meeting, if there were no substantive remarks or objections, it could help to reach a decision and consider a way forward. The Chair requested if there were any observations on the change or amendment proposed by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Chair repeated the amendment proposed by Group B to be included in the last line of the paragraph “but not limited to the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8”. The Chair hoped this would accommodate delegations. Furthermore, the Chair expressed his personal view on this issue globally, not only on those amendments, by pointing out that delegations were not having a debate on substantive issues in convening an Extraordinary General Assembly. The Chair said that this was approached in a consultative way as usual.
33. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, confirmed that it had seen the proposal of Group B and agreed on its concept. However, the Group would like to include the words “indicative list of items contained in the document” to reflect to all delegates that the Annex was actually an indicative list. Thus, the Group proposed for it to read “based on the indicative list of items contained in document A/61/8”. The Group reiterated its agreement with the spirit of what Group B had proposed, and wanted to reflect that what was in the document was indicative.
34. The Chair requested the Delegation of Singapore to clarify whether it was not retaining the language proposed by the Delegation of the United Kingdom but replacing it by indicative.
35. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asian and the Pacific Group, explained that it had tried to work around the text but the language seemed a bit clumsy. Hence, the initial language was “based on an agenda including the indicative list of items contained in document A/61/8”.
36. The Delegation of Chile pointed out that virtual participants had difficulties following the wording suggestions made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B and the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. In that regard, the Delegation indicated that it would be useful and beneficial for all for the redrafting exercise to be projected on the screen to enable delegations to follow the discussion. The Delegation understood that the proposal of the Asia and the Pacific Group was not an exclusion of the proposal of the Delegation of the United Kingdom – the inclusion would be “based on an agenda including but not limited to the indicative list contained in document A/61/8”. The Delegation said that both could work and that delegations could include both elements and consolidate, including the Delegations point.
37. The Chair recalled the hectic agenda for that day and the next. The Chair pointed out that it was not possible to enter into direct negotiations on the wording of each document. However, he believed that delegations were very close to reach a decision on Agenda Item 8. The Chair indicated that there were three alternatives on the table, including the Delegation of Chile’s proposal to mix the two amendments presented by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B, and the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Chair inquired if delegations agreed with the proposal of the Delegation of Chile.
38. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, stated that the decision in document A/61/8 as proposed by Group B indicated that there would be consultations on the agenda before the envisaged Extraordinary General Assembly. The Delegation agreed to the principle that the agenda should be negotiated. However, in its statement, the Delegation had requested that consultations also be on format, as members of its Group had substantial reservations on certain formats of meetings, especially virtual or hybrid meetings for substantive negotiations. Given the legalistic nature that the discussion was now taking, the Group would have to consult on the need to include language which would also cater its interest. The Group stated that it was very flexible, recalling that it had agreed to the decision initially proposed by the Chair, on the understanding that the Chair would conduct consultations together with the Secretariat and Member States. However, the Group believed that the nature that the discussion was now taking might be a bit too legalistic. The Group requested clarification on the effects in terms of the Group’s concerns, particularly, on the format of the meeting.
39. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, signaled that the suggestion proposed by the Delegation of Chile seemed reasonable, and it believed that it took into consideration the amendments proposed by both Group B and the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Group believed that it would be able to agree to that language.
40. The Chair appealed to the flexibility of all to revert to the decision proposed that morning and to adopt it, with the understanding that this debate would help delegations in the next period, if ever the Extraordinary General Assembly was convened, with circumstances permitting. The Chair noted that delegations had the same understanding about what to do together to prepare such an Extraordinary General Assembly. The Chair appealed to delegations to stick to the decision as read that morning. He believed that it was the best way to reach consensus. The Chair understood and thanked all the delegations who tried to make the decision clearer, but he believed that there was no ambiguities in that text. The Chair reiterated his plea to show flexibility and to adopt the decision as read that morning. The Chair read the proposed decision again “The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, requested the Director General of WIPO to convene extraordinary sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on an agenda including the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8, as corrected in document A/61/8 Corr.”
41. The Delegation of the United Kingdom thanked the Chair for his efforts. The Delegation hoped that delegations were nearly there at the end. Speaking on behalf of Group B, the Delegation said it gathered from the members of Group B that, the fact that the corrigendum introduced would suggest that it was important to delete the Hague System for some reason, which the Group did not believe was the case. The Delegation had thanked the Chair for the explanations and noted that the list was indicative, but Group B believe that the reference to the corrigendum should not be made in the decision.
42. The Chair stated that he had no problem with Group B’s proposal if other delegations accepted the proposal. The Chair recalled that the Secretariat’s explanation on that issue was also given that morning. However, he asked if delegations could accommodate that request. The Chair asked delegations to reconsider the same paragraph, without “as corrected in document A/61/8 Corr.” It was so agreed.
43. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, requested the Director General of WIPO to convene extraordinary sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO during the first half of 2021, based on an agenda including the items listed in the Annex to document A/61/8.”

## ITEM 9 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA DRAFT AGENDAS FOR 2021 ORDINARY SESSIONS

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

## ITEM 10 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA REPORTS ON AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

* + 1. Report by the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC)

1. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document WO/GA/53/9).
   * 1. Report by the External Auditor
2. Discussions were based on documents A/61/5 and A/61/6.
3. On behalf of the External Auditor, Mr. Damian Brewitt, Director, National Audit Office of the United Kingdom, delivered his report as follows:

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

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

“Turning first to the results of our audit of the financial statements, I am pleased to confirm that the External Auditor’s opinion was unqualified, and that the audit revealed no errors or weaknesses which we considered material to the accuracy, completeness, and validity of the Financial Statements as a whole. Our audit also focuses on whether the transactions have occurred in line with the Financial Regulations set by Member States. Our opinion also confirms this was satisfactory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“During 2019, WIPO made further advances in the area of fraud prevention and detection, delivering 15 of the 17 objectives in its anti-fraud Roadmap. Work is planned to link fraud risks to existing controls in order to identify gaps in the control framework. Fraud risks have been included within the Enterprise Risk Management System. Giving these risks greater visibility will ensure a focus on mitigation measures. Some 89 per cent of staff have now undertaken mandatory fraud awareness training, which is significantly better than comparators within the wider UN system. Overall, WIPO continues to be proactive in its approach to fraud prevention.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“This Committee has agreed to an evaluation of the network of external offices in 2021. We believe our report sets out some areas where the evaluation could focus to enhance the data available to better inform the decisions of the Member States on the future evolution of the network. As part of our future audit work we will review the actions taken by WIPO as a consequence of this evaluation.

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

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

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

1. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea expressed its appreciation to the External Auditor for its hard work in preparing the report in the difficult environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Delegation generally agreed with the recommendations made by the External Auditor, especially for those parts that dealt with external offices. The report by the External Auditor provided various useful pieces of information. Therefore, this report should be taken into account in the decision making process on the terms of reference for the evaluation of the entire network of WIPO External Offices. The Delegation was very pleased with the 31st PBC session item 16 decision which, “…recommended to the General Assembly to request the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) to decide during its 32nd session in 2021 the Terms of Reference of such an evaluation, taking into account all relevant documents including but not limited to, the report by the External Auditor…”
2. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, wished to address items 10(i), (ii) and (iii). The Group expressed its gratitude to the Chair and the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents under those items. The Group congratulated the Secretariat on an unqualified audit report for 2019. The oversight checks and balances were integral to inculcate the culture of ethical governance within the Organization and there were various recommendations which served to ensure a more efficient and productive Organization. The Group reiterated its comments from the 31st PBC session, and underscored the importance of Member States briefings by the IAOC and it encouraged greater interaction. With regard to external offices, the Group was of the view that some of the recommendations made by the External Auditor were relevant and could be of assistance among the relevant documents for drafting the terms of reference of the evaluation of the entire network of WIPO External Offices. However, the Group was of the view that such an evaluation should take into account Member States' guidance and inputs and be conducted in an open, transparent manner, and be consistent with the development dimensions that WIPO was pursuing through its programs and activities, including with regard to the implementation of the Development Agenda recommendations. The Group emphasized the importance of the topic given that Africa currently had two external offices in Algeria and Nigeria. The Group called for the alignment of the newly opened offices with the external offices network in terms of resources and programs.
3. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, thanked the External Auditor for his report and was happy to note the conclusion that the financial reporting in WIPO was of a very high standard. The Group also noted the effectiveness of the anti-fraud system as well as the internal control. The Group happily noted that WIPO had a sound financial basis and financial surpluses which meant that the Organization was well placed to withstand market uncertainties. The Group also noted that a high proportion of previously made recommendations had been fulfilled and hoped that those that remained outstanding would be implemented in the near future. As for the recommendation about the operation of the external office network, the Group believed that a strategy should be drafted that would be fully in line with the overall strategic gains of the Organization. In view of the indicators of productivity, which were used in assessing national and regional offices, the feedback between the offices and headquarters should be looked at as this could be used in assessing the real contribution made by the external offices to the Member States’ overall work. When considering the way in which the work of some of the offices might be assessed, the Group believed that some recommendations given could be very useful. Considering there was a large thematic document on the operation of the external offices, it was one that was adopted by consensus and there were a lot of things in that report that were useful and could be looked at in a constructive manner. The Group hoped to continue with a constructive mandate which would allow Member States to determine exactly what criteria would be used in assessing the work of these external offices. The Group also hoped to do so in the intersessional period so that at the PBC session in 2021, there would be a draft of such a document that would be used as the basis for that assessment.
4. The Delegation of China thanked the External Auditor for the annual report. The Delegation acknowledged and appreciated the effective work done by the External Auditor. With regard to the sound recommendations on the evaluation of external offices, the Delegation agreed with the decisions made at the 31st PBC session and reiterated that the establishment of the evaluation plan should fully take into consideration the views of the External Auditor and the Member States. The Delegation would continue to engage with all parties on the issue.
5. The Delegation of Algeria thanked the External Auditor for his report and commended him on the work done in giving a clear picture as to the financial statements of WIPO in accordance with the audit standards. The Delegation was happy that the Organization was well placed to move forward to promote a healthy, transparent and efficient management policy. The Delegation noted the External Auditor’s remarks that WIPO was well placed to survive in the climate of uncertainty created by COVID-19. Nonetheless, the Delegation stated that the oversight function would remain particularly important and called for vigilance concerning the possible impacts of the pandemic on the world and on WIPO. The Delegation congratulated the Secretariat on steps taken to formalize the approach to management of the network of external offices, which was highlighted in the External Auditor's report. The Delegation congratulated WIPO on the External Auditor’s remarks about improving the overall framework for the management of the external offices, in particular on how best to assess the impact of the offices and how to ensure that it could be even better in the future. The Delegation recalled that the External Auditor talked about tailored programs to reflect local priorities and improving the work plans and programs that were elaborated by the external offices. The Delegation believed that it was just as important to ensure that the newly established offices in Africa would be systematically integrated with the ongoing work with greater alignment of human resources in terms of the external offices and headquarters. It should be ensured that if they were truly to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they needed to be given resources and needed to be given leeway to adapt their activities in the course of the year in light of the needs of the countries that they served. The Delegation believed it was crucial to think about program sharing and experience sharing involving the different existing offices in order to optimize best practices within the network.
6. The Delegation of the Russian Federation endorsed the statement made by its Regional Group and expressed gratitude to the External Auditor for the work that had been done and the report that had been prepared. The Delegation was happy to note the positive assessment of the quality of the financial statements produced by WIPO and the progress in improving the internal control system. The Delegation positively viewed the stable, robust financial position of the Organization and the fact that there were sufficient reserves to guarantee stability, even at a time of general economic slowdown. The Delegation thanked the External Auditor for the recommendation on the external offices and the proposal for a mandate for evaluation. The Delegation explained that it supported some of the recommendations, in particular, those relating to developing a strategy for external offices and the diversification of indicators that are used to assess work on accountability. Some of the conclusions could also be taken into account when developing a mandate for the assessment of the evaluation. However, the Delegation believed that the idea of narrowing the way in which those offices worked, perhaps giving them very specific tasks, might lead to narrowing the overall range of the work done by the offices in general and might undermine their efficiency. Concerning a balance of responsibilities and decision making, the Delegation believed that all decisions taken with reference to the network of offices had to be taken by Member States. The network of external offices had been an effective instrument to implement WIPO programs and was effective in working with the headquarters of the Organization. The external offices had a significant role to play in enhancing accessibility to WIPO services and raising its profile. The external offices had operated in different regions with different kinds of languages and with different situations. The Delegation hoped to continue to discuss the matter of the assessment mandate constructively in the intersessional period.
7. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the External Auditor for presenting the report and noted with satisfaction the External Auditor's opinion that WIPO’s revenue and expenses had been applied to the purposes intended by the WIPO General Assembly. It was also pleased that financial transactions conformed to the Organization’s Financial Regulations and Rules. The Delegation was cognizant of WIPO’s sufficient and appropriate cooperation with the External Auditor. With regard to financial performance, the Delegation further noted that WIPO passed another successful financial period in 2019 and continued to enjoy a strong financial position and positive cashflows supported by a steady pipeline of future revenue streams. The Delegation was satisfied that despite the pandemic, WIPO had received a strong pipeline of applications in early 2020. Concerning governance and internal control, the Delegation was of the view that those mechanisms were essential tools which provided the Director General and Member States with assurances to enable them to discharge their oversight responsibilities and to safeguard resources. The Delegation continued to note the strength of WIPO's internal controls and further positive developments that had taken place in 2019. The Delegation noted the comment made by the External Auditor on the WIPO network of external offices and recalled that the majority of the recommendations were accepted by the Secretariat. The Delegation also noted the Secretariat’s responses to recommendations two and three, which were consistent with the Member States decisions. The Delegation recalled that according to the WIPO General Assembly decision, the opening of new external offices is subject to the decision by Member States and was a Member State-driven process.
8. The External Auditor thanked the Delegations for their comments and noted that those would be reflected in the follow-up of recommendations as part of the 2020 audit. The External Auditor appreciated the comments from Delegations with regard to the external offices sharing elements of good practice within their network, and believed that this would be something useful for WIPO to take forward.
9. The Director General thanked the External Auditor and his team for their work in the very challenging circumstances in 2020 for the 2019 audit. It was a considerable amount of work and the Organization was extremely grateful to the External Auditor for the thorough approach to that task. The Director General also extended thanks to the IAOC concerning item 10(i) and deeply appreciated their work.
10. The General Assembly and other Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO took note of the “Report by the External Auditor” (document A/61/5).
    * 1. Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD)
11. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document WO/GA/53/9).

## ITEM 11 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA REPORT ON THE PROGRAM AND BUDGET COMMITTEE (PBC)

1. Discussions were based on document A/61/6.
2. The Chair noted that the item covered all previous matters except the reports on Audit and Oversight, which would be discussed under Agenda Item 10.
3. The Secretariat stated that as 2020 was a non-budget year, only one session of the PBC was held, which was the 31st Session held from September 7 to 11, 2020. The PBC agenda covered a number of items, including Audit and Oversight matters, Performance and Financial Review, items and proposals following decisions of the 2019 Assemblies and, respectively, the 29th and 30th Sessions of the PBC. Some specific items discussed by the Member States during the PBC were to be addressed separately under Agenda Item 10. Those items included: the Report by the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee; the Report by the External Auditor; and the Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division. Member States engaged very constructively throughout the 31st session of the PBC with the Secretariat and took note or recommended for approval by the Assemblies, a number of items, as listed in document A/61/6. Those items included: the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit’s (JIU) Recommendations; the WIPO Performance Report 2018/19; the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) Validation Report of the WIPO Performance Report for 2018/2019; the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Membership; the Supplementary Capital Master Plan Projects; and the Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements 2019 and the Status of the Payment of Contributions as at June 30, 2020. In that connection, document A/61/INF/4 provided an update to the Status of the Payment of Contributions and Working Capital Funds as at August 31, 2020. Furthermore, since September 1 and as of September 21, the following contributions had been received: Gabon, 22 Swiss francs and Saint. Vincent and the Grenadines 2,849 Swiss francs. On the WIPO Policy on Languages, the PBC took note that the Secretariat would require more time to prepare the Revised WIPO Policy on Languages, due to the impact of COVID-19, which adversely affected the required consultations on the policy with stakeholders and Member States. The PBC requested the Secretariat to submit a comprehensive revised version of the Policy on Languages at the 32nd session of the PBC, including a sustainable roadmap for a phased multi-year implementation. The PBC also took note of the Analysis on the Management of WIPO’s Funds-in-Trust (FIT), including the key principles, which would be reflected in WIPO’s revised internal Policy on FIT. Finally, there were two PBC 31 Agenda Items, which were a follow up of decisions of the 29th Session of the PBC, the 30th session of the PBC, and the 2019 Assemblies of WIPO Member States, including the Terms of Reference of the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices and the Methodology for Allocation of Income and Expenditure by Union. As those items required extensive consultations both internally and with Member States, and it had not been possible to do so due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PBC requested that those items be deferred to the 32nd and 33rd sessions of the PBC in 2021.
4. The Chair, on behalf of all delegations, thanked Mr. Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General (ADG), for his long standing and outstanding contribution to WIPO. The ADG had been well‑known for having many years of experience in international organizations, and dealing with vital issues for the organizations, all during his professional tenure. The Chair recognized that his contribution, together with that of his team, had been a strong pillar for WIPO, and hoped that he would always keep on supporting international organizations as he had done throughout his career. The Chair recalled that the delegations had already engaged very constructively and had had ample opportunity to express their views on all these matters at the PBC session held two weeks prior. The statements of the PBC had been duly recorded and would be reproduced entirely in the report. Those statements did not necessarily have to be made again at the Assemblies but, of course, it was the delegations’ right and freedom to do so if they preferred. Delegations were asked to refer to those interventions for the sake of efficiency, as it was not necessary to take the floor to endorse or repeat statements made by Regional Coordinators. The Chair opened the floor to delegations on the matters covered by the Secretariat’s presentation on PBC matters with the exception of the reports on audit and oversight, which would be covered under Agenda Item 10.
5. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, expressed gratitude to the Chair for his very constructive contribution and for the Secretariat who managed to hold the session. The Group looked at many important issues including the finances of WIPO, as the PBC was able to approve the supplementary capital master plan. The Group hoped to continue constructive dialogue with regard to the mandate of the external offices, which was an item that had had to be postponed. The Group believed that work would be continued in the intersessional period. The Group felt that was a balanced approach to ensure adequate consultation before coming to a decision on the external offices, which were important for WIPO. Moreover, the Group hoped for progress with regard to the language policy and the roadmap on multilingualism. The Group suggested that overcoming linguistic barriers enabled a larger swath of users to have access to the IP system, and to the materials produced by the Organization and the IP system. The Group felt that it was important that using automated systems, such as AI and other digital systems should be integrated into the work of WIPO. New policies were needed, and could be useful in achieving the multilingualism policy. The Group concluded by thanking the ADG for his excellent work over the years.
6. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee. The Group thanked the PBC Chair and the Secretariat for their work prior to and during the 31st PBC session. The Group noted and understood that the 31st PBC session was not in a position to discuss and decide on the terms of reference (ToR) for the independent evaluation of the entire network of the WIPO external offices, and the methodology for allocation of income and expenditure by union. The Group stood ready to discuss those issues and looked forward to constructive discussions in the PBC.
7. The Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Sabri Bachtobji (Tunisia), congratulated the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly on his Chairmanship of the meeting and for his wise guidance. He thanked the Director General, Mr. Gurry, and his entire team and the Secretariat, for their excellent efforts to prepare for the Assemblies. He congratulated Mr. Daren Tang, the Director General-Elect who was preparing to take over his task as Director General and wished him success. He recalled that the 31st PBC session from the September 7 to 11, 2020 was conducted in a hybrid format. The PBC met in fairly satisfactory conditions, thanks to the efforts of all the regional groups, the delegations, as well as the Secretariat. None of them, in fact, spared any effort to make that session a successful one despite the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the exceptional circumstances, he pointed out that the positive results reached were due to having adopted dialogue and consensus amongst all delegations regarding all matters submitted with a view to achieving substantial progress in order to submit recommendations to the Assemblies. He thanked the ADG for his commitment and dedication and wished him the best for his future endeavors. Due to the collective effort, the PBC was able to review the performance of the Organization, financial matters, the annual report on human resources, and other items based on the decisions of the 29th and 30th PBC sessions in 2019. Those items, which included the external offices and the union allocation methodology, were postponed to the forthcoming session of the PBC. He thanked all the delegations and the Secretariat for a successful session and hoped to rely on them in the future so as to fulfill the tasks and duties at the forthcoming session.
8. The Chair thanked the Chair of the PBC for his statement and commended the readiness that he and other colleagues had shown in involving themselves with the activities and work of the Organization, especially since he had expressed his readiness, shortly after arriving in Geneva, to take over his tasks and duties. The Chair was certain that the Organization would depend on him to a great extent in its future endeavors and years.
9. The Delegation of China thanked the ADG for the presentation of the 31st PBC session. The Delegation took the opportunity to thank the ADG for his excellent work over the years, as well as his contribution to the improvement of WIPO's governance, and wished him all the best in his future endeavors. Facing the impacts of the unprecedented COVID‑19 pandemic, WIPO organized the 31st PBC session in a hybrid mode for the first time. All parties participated constructively in the meeting and the Secretariat had made tremendous efforts. The Delegation appreciated the positive results that were achieved on some issues during the meeting. The Delegation reiterated that data security risks brought by the cloud strategy could have a serious impact on WIPO systems, its users and WIPO as an Organization. This issue deserved utmost attention and the Delegation looked forward to further discussing on this issue with the Secretariat and Member States. On the external office network validation, consultations related to the terms of reference should be open and transparent to ensure an objective and comprehensive evaluation. Therefore, the PBC should take into account Member States' suggestion on that issue together with External Auditor's comments. On the revision of WIPO's language policy, the Delegation believed that, with the rapid expansion of WIPO global IP services in order to adapt to new users' needs and to provide more convenience, it was necessary for the Organization to extend the existing language settings of relevant systems. On the union allocation methodology, the Delegation believed that any decision to change the existing methods must be taken prudently, full studies must be conducted and full impact must be fully considered before any decision. The Delegation believed that unity of the Organization must be ensured and the issue of the union allocation methodology should not cause any division. The Delegation would continue its constructive participation in future discussions on all of the PBC’s agenda items.
10. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed its gratitude to the Chair and the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/61/6, which contained the List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee. The Group thanked the Chair of the PBC for his stewardship of the discussions held in the PBC. The Group noted that the PBC 31 met for the first time in a hybrid format and commended the flexibility displayed by Member States, which enabled the successful deliberations in the PBC. The Group welcomed the recommendations from the 31st PBC session, in particular the Group agreed with the decision to defer some issues, which required extensive negotiations to the following session of the PBC. The Group remained concerned about the impact of COVID‑19 on the finances and long‑term performance of the Organization and requested that the 32nd PBC session consider the impact of COVID‑19 on the financial health of the Organization. The Group noted the recommended decision on PBC Agenda Item 12, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) membership, and welcomed the invitation for WIPO to become a member of the UNSDG and urged the Organization to expedite the processes for membership. Membership of the UNSDG would complement existing WIPO UN system cooperation. The Group extended its gratitude to the ADG for his work for the Organization and wished him every success in his future endeavors.
11. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea was pleased with the success of the 31st PBC session, which was held in a hybrid format and which did not experience any technical problems. The Delegation expressed its appreciation to the PBC Chair, Member States and the WIPO Secretariat for their efforts to progress the discussion of agenda items. The Delegation expressed its sincere thanks to the ADG for his invaluable contribution to WIPO and wished him every success in his endeavors in the future. The Delegation generally agreed with the decisions made by the PBC. With regard to the terms of reference of the 2021 evaluation of WIPO external offices, the Delegation aligned itself with the PBC decision to recommend to the WIPO General Assembly to request the PBC to decide on the terms of reference during its 32nd session in 2021. Considering that the terms of reference were very important as a prerequisite for the evaluation, the Delegation was of the view that there should be a draft of the terms of reference before the 32nd PBC session. The Delegation believed that the preparation of a draft would help the PBC to expedite its discussion on the terms of reference and carry out the request of the WIPO General Assembly in a more effective and efficient way. The Delegation would take an active part in the discussions in the future.
12. The Delegation of the Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Chair of the PBC for his leadership and appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat regarding the successful organization of the 31st PBC session in a hybrid format. The Delegation was of the view that the work of the PBC, in particular discussions on WIPO’s financial issues, was more relevant than ever due to the adverse effects of the COVID‑19 pandemic on the global economy. The current global economic crisis could potentially affect WIPO's financial situation. Necessary measures should be undertaken to mitigate its negative impacts on WIPO programs, particularly technical assistance and capacity building projects. The Delegation was pleased that the WIPO Performance Report 2018/19 had been enhanced with redesigned strategic goal dashboards and including, for the first time, an overview of performance by expected results. The Delegation noted with satisfaction the positive financial performance and programmatic performance of the Organization toward achieving the expected result in the 2018/19 biennium. Concerning the UNSDG membership by WIPO, the Delegation highlighted the importance of WIPO's engagement with the UN system and other international organizations for the achievement of the broader UN system objective. On the terms of reference for the evaluation of WIPO external offices, the Delegation recalled the decisions made by the WIPO General Assembly in 2019 and was cognizant of the current restrictions imposed by the pandemic, which prevented the 31st PBC session from discussing and deciding on the terms of reference. The Delegation was of the conviction that, in the process of drafting the ToR, all relevant documents, including the decision of the WIPO General Assembly and Member States views, should be taken into account. It should be recalled that the decision on opening new external offices is a Member State driven process and this principle should be respected. On the allocation of income and expenditure by unions, the Delegation recalled the constraints which prohibited the PBC from having a very substantive discussion of the matter, and the deferral of the discussion to future PBC sessions. The Delegation maintained that in future discussions on the matter, the fundamental principle of solidarity among the unions and the principle of capacity‑to‑pay should be respected. The Delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to the ADG for all his commitment and dedication at WIPO and wished him all the best in the future.
13. The Delegation of the Russian Federation supported the statement made on behalf of CACEEC, and thanked the PBC Chair for the effective way in which he had led the session and helped the delegations come to an agreement in a very positive way. The Delegation noted the leadership of WIPO and the external auditor and the results of a healthy financial position and adequate reserves. The Delegation hoped that dialogue would continue on all of the topics under discussion, which had to be postponed until the next session of the PBC. The Delegation particularly hoped that, during the intersessional period, there would be work organized to ensure that there was a balanced mandate with regard to the assessment of work of the external offices, as well as for the revision of the WIPO language policy and the roadmap for multilingualism. The multilingual policy needed to be updated, particularly with regard to the use of innovative technology. Additional time for bringing in necessary amendments could be used to familiarize the delegations, and to take into account in the new report the recommendations of the JIU on multilingualism within the UN system. Language equality is one of the key values of the UN system, allowing free access to information and stimulating growth of the international registration system. The Delegation was ready to work actively and to participate in the future work of the PBC.
14. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned:

(i) took note of the “List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee” (document A/61/6); and

(ii) approved the recommendations made by the Program and Budget Committee as contained in the same document.

## ITEM 12 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA WIPO ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTER, INCLUDING DOMAIN NAMES

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

## ITEM 13 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA MADRID SYSTEM

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

## ITEM 14 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA HAGUE SYSTEM

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

## ITEM 15 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA PARIS UNION ASSEMBLY

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

## ITEM 16 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

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

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

## ITEM 17 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances (BTAP)

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

## ITEM 18 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA REPORTS ON STAFF MATTERS

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

## ITEM 19 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA Designation of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the WIPO Appeal Board (WAB)

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

## ITEM 20 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

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

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

## ITEM 21 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

1. Discussions were based on document A/61/9.
2. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned,
   * 1. adopted the Summary Report (document A/61/9); and
     2. requested the Secretariat to finalize the Extensive Reports, post them on the WIPO website and communicate them to Member States by October 24, 2020. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat by November 24, 2020, after which the final reports will be deemed adopted by December 15, 2020.

## ITEM 22 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA CLOSING OF THE SESSIONS

1. The Delegation of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of Group B, extended its thanks to the Chairs for their dedicated guidance throughout the Assemblies and for facilitating the discussions. Group B extended its appreciation to the Secretariat for its support in the lead‑up to and during the session. Group B stated that it would be remiss not to extend its thanks to the WIPO conference service staff, the skilled interpreters and the WIPO IT support staff without whom these Assemblies would not have been possible. Group B also thanked all Member States for their tireless efforts throughout the week. As stated in its opening statement, Group B welcomed that WIPO, a house of innovation and creativity, has been able to resume its intergovernmental work. The Group noted that the sixty-first series ofmeetings this week proved that working effectively in a hybrid format was possible, and led to consensual decisions both on government, oversight and substance. It particularly noted the fact that the membership was able to come together and agree on several changes to the international IP registration systems was a proof of the ability of Member States to enact sound measures essential in the times of crisis and beneficial in the long-run. Furthermore, the Group welcomed and applauded the Secretariat, delegations and officers for making the hybrid format truly functional. These included a couple of welcome first. Most notably, the successful presiding over sessions by Chairs connected remotely. Group B considered it a good practice that decision language be projected on the screen to ensure that all delegations in the room and those connected remotely could follow the decision-making. This was especially important if proposed decision language was being revised. Practice makes perfect and the more delegations come together physically and virtually the less abnormal it will become. The Group called on all Member States to work together to optimize hybrid meetings for the sake of the Organization and the Member States’ role. Group B looked forward to seeing work being conducted in an inclusive and pragmatic manner in the Working Groups and Committees scheduled over the autumn and beyond. Group B could see that the Extraordinary General Assembly to be convened by the Director General in the first half of 2021 was an opportunity to deal flexibly with the substantive issues that delegations were not able to tackle during the week, due to the postponement of the Working Groups and the Committees in 2020, and to provide a direction of travel to the Organization. Finally, the Group genuinely thanked those who were participating in their last WIPO meeting, in their current positions, in particular, the Director General.
2. The Delegation of Latvia, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group, thanked the Chair and his Vice‑Chairs for all their efforts in the General Assembly. The CEBS Group was pleased that the General Assembly was made possible during these extraordinary circumstances of the ongoing global pandemic. The Group reiterated its thanks to the Secretariat for the preparation of the documents and meetings, and the interpreters for their hard work and excellent performance. The Group also thanked all the delegations participating in the General Assembly both on site and virtually, and for their constructive contributions to the deliberations.
3. The Delegation of China noted that, with the joint efforts of all parties and for the first time in history, the General Assembly was convened successfully in a physical and online hybrid mode, completing all the agenda items and reaching the expected results. The Delegation extended its appreciation and gratitude to the Director General and the Secretariat for their hard work in guaranteeing the smooth running of the meetings. The Delegation also extended its appreciation and thanks to the Chairs and Vice‑Chairs of the Assemblies, for their excellent work. The Delegation noted that this WIPO General Assembly session and the 31st PBC session held recently have gained valuable experience for WIPO Committees and Working Group meetings to be held this year in a similar hybrid mode. The Delegation commended the joint efforts of the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly, the Secretariat and the Chairs who presided the relevant Assemblies meetings remotely. The Delegation noted that it was a useful attempt worth continuing and improving. The Delegation was confident that with joint efforts, delegations shall overcome the negative impact of the pandemic and push forward consultations on various agenda items and relevant norm setting work. The Delegation stated that the UN convened a summit commemorating the 75th anniversary of its creation on September 21. The President of China, Xi Jinping, stated in his speech to the Summit “Major changes unseen in a century are taking place in our world. The sudden attack of COVID-19 is a grave test for the entire world. Mankind has entered a new era of interconnectedness with the countries sharing intertwined interests and their future closely linked together. Global threats and global challenges require strong global response.” The Delegation believed that in the process of responding to the threats and the challenges of COVID-19, WIPO as a UN specialized agency in charge of IP affairs, has and shall continue to play an important role in promoting international cooperation in the IP area. WIPO will use its expertise in the IP field to coordinate the efforts of Member States to combat the pandemic with solidarity. The Delegation appreciated the cooperative spirit and the flexibility demonstrated at this conference. The Delegation looked forward to all parties keeping the momentum for consultations on agenda items in the future, thus enhancing the important role of WIPO in the discussion of those items relating to risk bounding to global threats and challenges. The Delegation reiterated its thanks and best wishes for the future to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, and the Assistant Director General, Mr. Ambi Sundaram, for their outstanding contributions in WIPO's development. The Delegation thanked the translators and interpreters for the high quality of the translation and interpretation they provided for the Assemblies, which ensured the smooth running of the meeting. In closing, the Delegation wished good health and safety to colleagues based in Geneva and in capitals.
4. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed its appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs, Director General, Francis Gurry and the Secretariat for a most harmonious, productive and efficient Assemblies in WIPO’s history. The Group noted that it was the first Assemblies to have been conducted through hybrid means and congratulated the Organization and Member States for having come together in common purpose to carry the work of the Organization forward. In spite of the significant challenges that COVID-19 had imposed on the operations of the Organization and the ability of Member States to carry out substantive negotiations, the Group sternly believed that the flexibility and good faith displayed in these Assemblies was a true example of multilateral diplomacy. The Group also believed that this flexibility, if taken forward in other discussions in the Organization, may just be the solution to the many longstanding norm setting agenda. The Group commended the Assemblies for agreeing to convene an Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in the first half of 2021 to deliberate on substantive discussions. This had been necessitated by the disruption to norm setting work. However, the Group was of the view that, due to the ongoing uncertainty, the convocation needs to be proceeded by consultations with Member States on the format of the agenda of the extraordinary session, to ensure that deliberations are inclusive, transparent and effective. On audit and oversight, the Group commended the Secretariat for having obtained an unqualified audit report for 2019. The Group also commended the open and transparent dissemination of information and appreciated the Secretariat’s commitment to adhere to best practices in financial management. The Group noted the recommendations contained in the Report by the External Auditor, in particular the recommendations on external offices, an important reference point in the evaluation of external offices. However, the Group cautioned Member States to be mindful of the development dimension in the evaluation of external offices. The Group stated that the amendments to the Hague and Madrid Systems to make email a required indication were welcome and beneficial. The same could be said for the Paris Convention’s non-binding guidance note on the right of priority in emergencies. The Group witnessed the inaugural session of the Beijing Treaty Assembly and the update on the current number of Member States that had acceded to the Treaty. The Group urged more members to accede to the Treaty and commended the Secretariat for the awareness raising initiatives and assistance in the legislative alignment. In addition, the Group urged Member States to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty. The Group appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat in inculcating gender parity and increased geographical representation in the workforce of WIPO. It encouraged the Secretariat to increase those initiatives to achieve a more inclusive and multicultural workforce which would reflect the membership of the Organization. In realizing the challenges that COVID-19 had caused, the Group noted that, in the selection of a new SMT, Member States agreed to a temporary exceptional reappointment of the current SMT for a three-month period to enable a seamless transition. The Group hoped that this intervention shall afford the Director General‑Elect enough opportunity to nominate individuals based on experience, merit and being mindful of the principles of geographical representation and gender parity. In closing, the Group noted that these Assemblies marked the end of an era for the Organization led by Director General Francis Gurry, who had acquitted himself to many years of service to the Organization. The Group wished him well in his future endeavors and stated that he shall forever be remembered for his enduring and lasting legacy as a champion in IP. Finally, the Group noted that these Assemblies also marked the beginning of a new era under the Director General-Elect, Daren Tang, and the Group looked forward to working with him in carrying out the work of the Organization into a development-oriented future.
5. The Delegation of Singapore, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, thanked everyone who had contributed to this very efficient and effective sixty-first series of meetings, in particular the Chair for his leadership and determination in steering the Assemblies and delivering some meaningful outcomes, including the recognition of the good work achieved by the Marrakesh Treaty and the Beijing Treaty. Both treaties were a reminder of the positive impact that delegations could bring to society if everyone worked together. The Group extended its appreciation to the Secretariat, the conference team, IT staff and the interpreters, for their excellent work in supporting the Assemblies. The Group reiterated its warmest appreciation to Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General. Last but not the least, the Group joined all delegations in sincerely thanking the Director General Francis Gurry, for his dedication to, and advancement of, WIPO. The Report of the Director General to the 2020 WIPO Assemblies, aptly entitled Retrospective 2020, reflects the profound impact he had had on the Organization. The Group wished him the very best in his future endeavors. In closing, the Group looked forward to the continued engagement with all Member States in their collective efforts to move the Organization forward.
6. The Delegation of Panama, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Chair for his leadership and his efforts in conducting the work of these Assemblies, as well as the Secretariat for their preparatory work and their efforts during these series of meetings. GRULAC said that, in spite of the new technological tools that had facilitated the participation of delegations at the meeting, Member States had also noted the major challenges that made it very difficult for delegations to reengage work completely. GRULAC attaches considerable importance to the work of WIPO in all its aspects, and reiterated the need for WIPO to continue and redouble its efforts in encouraging the use of IP as a tool for innovation and development. GRULAC noted the importance of strengthening the cross‑cutting approach of the Development Agenda and its 45 recommendations in all of the initiatives and Committees of the Organization. There was the need to have this as an active and dynamic agenda, particularly focusing on cooperation and capacity building. GRULAC was pleased that an agreement had been reached on the possible convening of an Extraordinary General Assembly in 2021, whether or not the health conditions would permit meetings to take place physically, as well as all the various arrangements that need to be agreed upon by Member States. GRULAC welcomed the three-month extension of the SMT to the end of 2020, which will assist the Director General-Elect in the transition until a new SMT takes office at a later stage, noting that this would allow the Director General-Elect enough time to submit a list of the right candidates to the WIPO Coordination Committee. Turning to the HR report, GRULAC welcomed the tangible progress made but wished to reiterate the Organization’s debt to its region in terms of the lack of geographical distribution within the staff of the Organization. GRULAC therefore requested that the recruitment policy of WIPO manages to overcome this problem effectively in the future. GRULAC thanked the interpreters and the conference services for their priceless support. GRULAC requested the Organization to provide solutions to their members to enable them to obtain interpretation services virtually not only in the Committees and these Assemblies, but also in the coordination meetings with the various regional groups. GRULAC concluded by thanking Director General Francis Gurry for his stewardship and efforts in the helm of the Organization, as well as for the progress and the results achieved in the normative agenda during his period of office. GRULAC also thanked the current SMT for its efforts, and wished them every success in their new endeavors.
7. The Delegation of the Russian Federation, speaking on behalf of CACEEC, thanked the organizers of these series of meetings of the Assemblies. The CACEEC stated that in a very short period of time, delegations have been able to discuss issues and reached mutual understanding in their positions. In resolving some of the most sensitive issues, delegations observed that the skillful diplomacy of the Chair had played a key role, and the Group believed that it had been very important to achieving balanced decisions. The CACEEC thanked the regional coordinators who had done an enormous amount of work, as well as the Director General and his team who had been very actively involved. The CACEEC noted that a number of key issues were discussed such as the adoption of the Paris Union complimentary document, the fundamental requirements relating to the Madrid and Hague Systems, the Extraordinary Session of the WIPO General Assembly to be held in the first half of next year, as well as the Extraordinary Session of the WIPO Coordination Committee scheduled for this year. The CACEEC noted that, because the Beijing Treaty had entered into force, there was a need to make changes to the way of work, which had been done very successfully. The CACEEC noted that cooperation had prevailed and that delegations had been able to work on the documents in a very constructive spirit. The CACEEC expressed its gratitude to all the Member States for the constructive dialogue that had prevailed throughout the discussions. The CACEEC noted that the meetings were held in different conditions than usual, which meant that the Secretariat had to do more work than usual by adapting promptly and at a very high level of quality to the new conditions. The CACEEC said that there was no doubt that these hybrid meetings cannot replace the traditional face-to-face meetings, particularly regarding consultations on sensitive agenda items. However, the CACEEC was very grateful to those who had made it possible for delegations to achieve results this week. The CACEEC also thanked the translators and the interpreters. The CACEEC highlighted that, by working together, Member States had managed to achieve something quite significant despite the challenges in this very difficult period. The CACEEC thanked the Director General for all that he had done, not only this week but over several years. He has really made WIPO the heart of innovation, the introduction of new technologies and a real home for Geneva delegations. The CACEEC reiterated its congratulations to Mr. Tang on his election, and wished him every success in his transition to the new period, and looked forward to working with him in future. The CACEEC reassured him that it would continue to participate in the collective efforts to promote the work of the Organization.
8. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member states, thanked the Chair for his efforts and guidance throughout the week that had led to successful Assemblies, the first in a hybrid format. The Delegation also thanked the Secretariat, whose hard work and excellent performance during the week was indispensable for the smooth and effective running of these Assemblies. The Delegation noted that the successful conduct of these Assemblies simply showed WIPO’s great ability to adapt to these special circumstances, and its ability to act and to show the right direction for the future work of the Organization. The Delegation reiterated its continued commitment to WIPO's work, and WIPO could count on the active support of the European Union and its member states.
9. The Delegation of Jamaica thanked the Chair for his excellent conduct of the meeting. The Delegate said that, although it was five in the morning in Jamaica, she had been following the meetings since three a.m., which makes it quite difficult for their Delegation. However, the Delegation thanked the Chair for guiding the Member States throughout the meeting in this revised format. The Delegation also extended its thanks especially to the interpreters noting that the interpretation had been fantastic. The Delegation aligned itself to the statement made by the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation recognized the challenges of delegations on this side of the world who had to be awake early to be able to participate in the discussions. The Delegation placed on record the excellent relationship it had enjoyed with Mr. Ambi Sundaram, and also recognized and thanked Director General, Francis Gurry for the untiring support that he had showed, not only towards Jamaica, but towards the Caribbean region. The Delegation acknowledged that Dr. Gurry and WIPO were friends of the region, and the Delegation thanked him immensely and wished him all the best in his new endeavors. The Delegation looked forward to working with Director General-Elect Daren Tang. As delegations tried to navigate and work to find an effective way to work and have discussions and negotiations, the Delegation believed that going forward would be a challenge because it would like to participate but the pandemic was a challenge for it to deal with the substantive work of the Organization. The Delegation participated in the PBC and it was a challenge for the Delegation to contribute substantively. The Delegation hoped and knows that WIPO is the center of all innovation, therefore the Delegation was looking forward to WIPO expanding an innovative way for the Delegation to work to meet the Organization and to continue to contribute to the development of especially small island States.
10. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Jamaica for following the works of these Assemblies in the early hours and for its statement. The Chair said that the delegation’s statement as well as the other statements was a testimony of the very high professional way the Assemblies had been organized, particularly by the Secretariat, and also the testimony of the importance of the Organization.
11. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Chair for his guidance and leadership in the course of the week. The Delegation appreciated the constructive engagement of all regional groups and individual Member States, which made these very exceptional Assemblies were a success. The Delegation stated that it was the last Assemblies that delegations had been privileged to work with Dr. Gurry as the WIPO Director General. The Delegation, speaking on behalf of its Ambassador, His Excellency Esmaeil Baghaei Hamaneh and all IP authorities in Tehran, extended its sincere gratitude and thanks to Mr. Gurry, for all his commitments and dedication in the course of his tenure. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Gurry for all his achievements and wished him the best of success in his future endeavors. The Delegation invited delegations to stand and give Mr. Gurry a round of applause. [*Delegations stood and gave Mr. Gurry a round of applause*]. The Delegation welcomed the new Director General and looked forward to working with him in a collective effort to fulfill WIPO's global mandate. The Delegation affirmed that, in the relentless pursuit of dialogue and multilateralism, Iran (Islamic Republic of) will always be a steadfast partner.
12. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea appreciated the Chair’s skillful leadership in conducting the meeting successfully. The Delegation stated that, with the development of the society and economy, the role of WIPO was getting more important and noted that WIPO has been contributing to the development of the world economy in line with WIPO’s mandate. The Delegation stated that the success of WIPO was due to the dedication, commitment and skillful leadership of Dr. Francis Gurry, the outgoing Director General. The Delegation joined all Member States in thanking and appreciating Dr. Gurry for his lifelong dedication to WIPO. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Daren Tang, the Director General-Elect. The Delegation wished Dr. Gurry the very best.
13. The Delegation of Nigeria thanked the Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) for allowing delegations to give Dr. Francis Gurry a standing ovation. Although participating remotely, the Delegation had joined the well-deserved standing ovation. The Delegation commended the Chair for the excellent manner in which he had conducted and guided the work of the Assemblies to a successful conclusion in an exemplary manner. The Delegation appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the Secretariat to ensure the smooth running of the Assemblies. The Delegation paid special tribute to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, for his 12 years of excellency at the helm of WIPO. The Delegation wished Mr. Daren Tang, Director General‑Elect, a successful tenure. In that regard, Mr. Tang could count on Nigeria's full support. The Delegation also extended its appreciation to Mr. Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General, for his 12 years of dedicated service to WIPO, and wished him the best in his future endeavors. The Delegation aligned itself with the statement delivered by Zimbabwe, on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation noted that this year's Assemblies were held during one of the most challenging times in human history, which made delegations reflect on the challenge of achieving coherence, consensus and effectiveness in the important work of WIPO. Nonetheless, delegations had all worked together to ensure the business continuity of the Organization during these exceptional times, while achieving the objectives set out by the Assemblies. The Delegation observed that the measures taken to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the Organization and safeguard public health had been exemplary, especially in the way WIPO had continued to innovate and provide essential services to facilitate the mission of delegations to address the challenges of those in the most vulnerable contexts. The Delegation saluted every participant present at the Assemblies and those who joined remotely. The Delegation extended its special thanks to the interpreters, the accreditation unit and those who had worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure the success of the Assemblies. With a continued commitment by all members and the consistent support of the WIPO Secretariat, who continued to succeed in translating the shared vision for an enhanced WIPO, the Delegation will continue to participate actively in WIPO. The Delegation reaffirmed its commitment to work with all Member States to strengthen the Organization for the benefit of all stakeholders.
14. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea reiterated its thanks to the Chair and the Member States who had shown strong leadership and a constructive spirit. In addition, the Delegation thanked the Secretariat, especially the conference service team and interpreters, for their excellent work in supporting the Assemblies. Furthermore, the Delegation extended its heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Francis Gurry, for his invaluable contributions during his term. The Delegation noted that under his leadership WIPO had performed in an efficient and effective manner and produced many stellar results. The Delegation wished him the best in his future endeavors. The Delegation looked forward to continuing this constructive spirit and discussions, and wished delegations good health.
15. The Delegation of Canada aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of Group B. The Delegation noted that, after 35 years of service to the Organization, the Director General had only a week to his term and that it felt a bit real or surreal. The Delegation congratulated the Director General for his work in making WIPO what it is today and for the support he had provided to Canada as it furthers its IP regime and consolidates its active role in the IP world. The Delegation also congratulated Mr. Sundaram for his dedicated service and availability. The Delegation congratulated Mr. Tang on his appointment and looked forward to working with him to continue to foster the Organization and to take WIPO even further ahead. Furthermore, the Delegation congratulated everyone in the Administration and the Management Sector, and in the Assemblies Affairs and Documentation Division, for their superb work in adapting the Assemblies to this hybrid format. The Delegation looked forward to pragmatic, sensible and incremental resumption of normative work, and believed that delegations needed to find middle ground and practical means between not meeting at all and holding negotiation meetings. The Delegation realized that it was not equally easy for everyone. Although the Delegation had its own challenges, it believed that it was important to find a practical and mutually agreeable middle ground. With regard to certain aspects of the registration systems and the global IP infrastructure, the Delegation said that users depended on the decisions and stewardship of Member States to ensure the continued development of the systems. The Delegation reminded that the WIPO committees provide a unique opportunity for stakeholders, and particularly in the case of the IGC for indigenous people and local communities, to make their voices heard. The Delegation applauded WIPO's resilience as regards the registration systems as witnessed this year. The Delegation noted that WIPO was very much the crossroads of multilateralism in IT but was also the world's IP office, and that continued development and predictability of the registration systems were certainly crucial from an administrative perspective.
16. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic extended its sincere congratulations to the Director General-Elect, Mr. Daren Tang. The Delegate stated that it had recently taken over directorship of the National Copyright Office (ONDA), with a firm determination to continue to contribute to the pooled efforts of members of the Organization, to promote tangible and effective policies on copyright and related rights, and in particular to join efforts with other offices in its region to achieve common goals. The Delegation said that COVID-19 had had a substantial impact on daily life and had rocked the global economy. The Delegation noted that artists, authors and creators had found it difficult and had had to cancel concerts; the cultural economy had been struck by cancellations of several events and there had been millions of losses. The Delegation stated that creative and cultural industries would continue to be an engine of economic growth in all countries and that was the reason why many governments had taken measures to protect entrepreneurship to try to limit the impact of COVID-19 on unemployment and on economic losses of companies, as well as taken initiatives to design new public policies. The Delegation was determined to pull its efforts to improve regional international cooperation, to promote and protect IP copyright and related rights. It was the priority of the Dominican Republic to ensure that copyright is respected, and that protected works generate income and contribute to its GDP while becoming a productive industry. The Delegation believed its Government had to pay specific attention to the Beijing Treaty. The Delegation was in the process of guaranteeing the achievement of that Treaty. The Delegation stated that ONDA must ensure that audiovisual rights are protected at the international level to implement the Treaty successfully. It therefore appreciated the initiatives in that respect. The Delegation needed to consider whether there was the need to examine how to incorporate specific tangible measures that guarantee respect for copyright. In respect of the rights of audiovisual performances in the area of digital development, the Delegation believed in the promotion of the sustainability of the creative and audiovisual economies because they had such an important contribution to the well-being of the society. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its constant support and collaboration with ONDA as it takes the role of its office further. The Delegation affirmed its readiness to continue implementing copyright and related rights initiatives in the Dominican Republic.
17. The Delegation of Zimbabwe, speaking in its national capacity, aligned itself with the statement of the African Group. The Delegation expressed its appreciation to the Chair and Vice‑Chairs, the Secretariat, the translators and all the conference and administrative divisions for facilitating a successful Assemblies. The Delegation commended Member States for concluding several matters without which the Organization would not be able to carry its essential work. The Delegation appreciated the development oriented technical assistance it had received from WIPO during the tenure of Dr. Francis Gurry, under the auspices of the African Bureau and other divisions. The Delegation invited Mr. Gurry to visit Zimbabwe anytime, if ever he wished to spend his retirement days in the wonderful Victoria Falls. The Delegation also extended its gratitude to Mr. Ambi Sundaram for his 12 years of service to the Organization, and wished him well in his future endeavors. The Delegation also welcomed Director General-Elect Daren Tang and looked forward to working with him, as well as working with other Member States in ensuring the success of the Organization.
18. The Delegation of Chile paid tribute to the Chair and aligned itself with the statement of the Delegation of Panama on behalf of GRULAC. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for making this meeting possible, even in the context of the pandemic, and in particular the team of interpreters who made communication possible. The Delegation thanked the outgoing Director General Francis Gurry for all his support to its country and for his services to multilateralism. The success of his management was witnessed in every area of work of the Organization.
19. The Chief of Staff, Mr. Naresh Prasad, speaking on behalf of the staff of WIPO, placed on record the Organization’s deepest sense of appreciation to the Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry, who has been at the helm of WIPO for the past 12 years. The Chief of Staff said that Mr. Gurry turned the Organization into a modern, efficient, responsive but, above all, an inclusive Organization. The Chief of Staff stated that Mr. Gurry, through his untiring efforts and single‑minded devotion, succeeded in opening up the Organization to all its Member States and its multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, Mr. Gurry had overseen the implementation of a flurry of programs and projects, which have been of interest to each and every stakeholder of WIPO. The Chief of Staff believed that this would be Mr. Gurry's lasting legacy and the Organization thanked him for that. The Chief of Staff, speaking in his personal capacity, thanked the Director General for the trust and confidence that he had reposed in him, and for having given him the opportunity to serve as the Secretary of the Assemblies and other Governing Bodies of WIPO. The Chief of Staff said that during the past 12 years, in that capacity, he had had the rare opportunity to serve as Secretary of the Assemblies for over 250 governing bodies. It had been, to say the least, an enriching as well as a very humbling experience, and it would not have been possible without the constant support and guidance that he received from Mr. Gurry. The Chief of Staff reiterated his thanks to Mr. Gurry. The Chief of Staff, on behalf of his colleagues in WIPO, took the opportunity to wish Mr. Gurry all the best in his future endeavors. The Chief of Staff was sure that without the trappings of the position of Director General, Mr. Gurry would continue to contribute to a free world full of opportunities, waiting to make use of his skills and experience. In conclusion, the Chief of Staff said that it would be remiss not to thank all his colleagues, too many to name individually, for making the Assemblies a successful one, despite very challenging circumstances.
20. The Delegation of Indonesia aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation thanked the Chair and the Vice-Chairs for their excellent conduct of the General Assembly under the special circumstances. The Asia and the Pacific Group congratulated and thanked Member States, the Secretariat, the interpreters and all for their excellent contributions to the smooth convening of the meeting that enabled delegations to attain positive decisions on all agenda items. The Delegation congratulated the Director General, Dr. Francis Gurry on his excellent leadership in guiding the Organization, and reiterated its appreciation to Dr. Gurry’s service and contributions to WIPO in the past 35 years, which included 12 years of service as the Director General. The Delegation did not wish to repeat what the Chief of Staff had eloquently stated on the achievement and legacies of Dr. Gurry. The Delegation wished Dr. Gurry all the best for his future endeavors. The Delegation reiterated its congratulations to Daren Tang on his appointment as the Director General of WIPO. The Delegation affirmed its commitment to continue to support the mission of the Organization for a balanced international IP system under the excellent leadership of Director General Daren Tang. The Delegation recognized the challenges posed by the pandemic and hoped that normative work would soon continue. The Delegation was convinced that delegations would re‑emerge stronger and more united, and would be able to have face-to-face meetings once again.
21. The Director General thanked delegations for their extremely generous words and indulgence, over the course of the last 12 years, as well as for their capacity to forgive. The Director General reiterated that it had been a journey of opening. It is a privilege to be able to serve in an international organization in any capacity and, certainly, to serve as a Director General was a great privilege because it was an opportunity for opening to the diversity of the world. In particular, with the experience and the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Director General believed that delegations had a shared destiny and that one of the roles of an international organization was to unite delegations around the shared destiny and consider how to confront it together in the best possible manner. The Director General therefore deeply appreciated the opportunity delegations had given him, which was a privilege. With regard to the meeting, the Director General thanked all delegations for their patience, perseverance and indulgence. The Director General believed that the meeting was successful given the circumstances, and thanks to the contributions of delegations, in particular the group coordinators who bore a particular heavy burden under the circumstances of the meeting. For the past six months, cognizant that the meeting would take place in special circumstances, they had been extremely attentive and highly consultative with the Organization and all the Member States. The Director General acknowledged that it was in large part thanks to the leadership, guidance and wisdom of the Chair that the meeting had functioned smoothly. The Director General reiterated his thanks to the Chair. The Director General thanked the Chief of Staff, Secretary of the Assemblies, for his extraordinary work. The Director General said that it was not easy to organize the Assemblies because WIPO was a complicated Organization with various unions and a complex architecture. However, the Chief of Staff had once again delivered in an outstanding manner. The Director General thanked the Chief of Staff and all his colleagues, in particular, the Assemblies Affairs and Documentation Division, and the several colleagues who had contributed. The Director General also thanked the outstanding performance of the conference services, the Legal Counsel and his Office, the support services, the interpreters who were mentioned with deep gratitude by a number of delegations, the cleaning staff who did an extraordinary job in making sure that delegations could meet in hygienic circumstances, the security services colleagues and the many colleagues who contributed. The Director General stated that this was an example of a collaborative effort and a good example of why collective action, and eventually multilateralism, provides the best results because everyone was able to contribute. In conclusion, the Director General expressed his deepest gratitude and thanks to all delegations for the privilege and the opportunity they had given him. The Director General wished his successor, Daren Tang, every success, in which he believed would be an outstanding mandate.
22. The Chair reiterated the capacity of Member States to achieve the best possible results thanks to their determination flexibility and willingness to move forward the work of the Organization, which was an example of multilateralism. The Chair congratulated delegations because the Assemblies took place as scheduled in the best possible conditions and facilitated participation. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for the excellent organization and for ensuring the health and safety of all, which remained his and the Secretariat’s priority. The Chair noted that the hybrid format meeting was a test for all delegations and a challenge for the Organization, testing its capacity to move the work forward. Furthermore, the Chair stated that it was a test for logistical and technical capacities, in which the Organization had invested strongly. The Chair believed that it was an opportunity for all delegations to witness the handover of the post of the Director General of the Organization, and an opportunity for delegations to express their appreciation for the immense contribution of the outgoing Director General, Mr. Gurry. The Chair acknowledged the Director General’s great efforts during his two terms of office and said that it had been an opportunity to pay tribute to him. The Chair congratulated the incoming Director General. The Chair stated that the successful and excellent participation in the meeting reflected the importance that Member States attached to the Organization and all its topics such as culture, economy, and creativity. The Chair stated that, as he continues his term as the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly and engagement in meetings, he would intensify consultations over the next coming months to prepare the next Assemblies, one Extraordinary Assembly and other Ordinary Assemblies in 2021, in accordance with a clear roadmap reflecting all the expectations of Member States. In concluding, the Chair extended his sincere thanks to all Member States, observers, regional coordinators and the Vice-Chairs, for their excellent cooperation and contribution. The Chair also thanked the Secretariat, including all of the support staff, for their excellent preparation and conduct prior and during these Assemblies, and for issuing documentation on time. In addition, the Chair thanked the Chief of Staff for his excellent work as Secretary of the Assemblies, the Legal Counsel for his support, and all the WIPO staff who had shown great professionalism. The Chair had been honored to work with all of them during these series of meetings. The Chair also said that it would be remiss not to thank the excellent team of interpreters, without whom communication would have been impossible. The Chair apologized to the interpreters for changing languages from time to time. However, he believed that changing languages was a good reflection of multilingualism that delegations defended. The Chair wished delegations a safe trip back home. Given the exceptional circumstances whereby there were remote participants as well, the Chair hoped the remote participants would get the opportunity to participate face‑to‑face next time, to enable them to contribute fruitfully to discussions on important issues. The Chair concluded by wishing every success to the new Director General and to all of WIPO Staff under his stewardship. The Chair looked forward to the next meeting and wished all a good weekend. The Chair, on behalf of all Member States, reiterated thanks to the Director General for his work of more than three decades, his term as Director General for 12 years, and wished him every success in his future endeavors and a long and healthy life.
23. The Sixty-First Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO was closed by the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly on September 24, 2020.

[Annex follows]