

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

Sixty-Fourth Series of Meetings Geneva, July 6 to 14, 2023

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-sixth (26th ordinary) session
- (2) WIPO Conference, forty-fourth (26th ordinary) session
- (3) WIPO Coordination Committee, eighty-second (54th ordinary) session
- (4) Paris Union Assembly, fifty-ninth (26th ordinary) session
- (5) Paris Union Executive Committee, sixty-third (59th ordinary) session
- (6) Berne Union Assembly, fifty-third (26th ordinary) session
- (7) Berne Union Executive Committee, sixty-ninth (54th ordinary) session
- (8) Madrid Union Assembly, fifty-seventh (25th ordinary) session
- (9) Hague Union Assembly, forty-third (24th ordinary) session
- (10) Nice Union Assembly, forty-third (26th ordinary) session
- (11) Lisbon Union Assembly, fortieth (25th ordinary) session
- (12) Locarno Union Assembly, forty-third (25th ordinary) session
- (13) IPC [International Patent Classification] Union Assembly, forty-fourth (24th ordinary) session
- (14) PCT [Patent Cooperation Treaty] Union Assembly, fifty-fifth (24th ordinary) session
- (15) Budapest Union Assembly, fortieth (22nd ordinary) session
- (16) Vienna Union Assembly, thirty-sixth (22nd ordinary) session
- (17) WCT [WIPO Copyright Treaty] Assembly, twenty-third (11th ordinary) session
- (18) WPPT [WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty] Assembly, twenty-third (11th ordinary) session
- (19) PLT [Patent Law Treaty] Assembly, twenty-second (10th ordinary) session
- (20) Singapore Treaty [Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks] Assembly, sixteenth (8th ordinary) session
- (21) Marrakesh Treaty [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled] Assembly, eighth (8th ordinary) session.
- (22) BTAP [Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances] Assembly, fourth (4th ordinary) session

meeting in Geneva from July 6 to 14, 2023, and which made decisions in joint meetings of two or more of the said Assemblies and other bodies convened (hereinafter referred to as “the joint meeting(s)” and “the Assemblies of the Member States,” respectively).

2. In addition to this General Report, separate Reports have been drawn up on the sessions of the WIPO General Assembly (WO/GA/56/14), WIPO Coordination Committee (WO/CC/82/6), PCT Union Assembly (PCT/A/55/4), Madrid Union Assembly (MM/A/57/2), Hague Union Assembly (H/A/43/2), Lisbon Union Assembly (LI/A/40/2) and the Singapore Treaty Assembly (STLT/A/16/2). Furthermore, consolidated reports of the sessions of the other bodies have also been drawn up, as follows: WIPO Conference (WO/CF/44/1), Paris Union Assembly (P/A/59/1), Paris Union Executive Committee (P/EC/63/1), Berne Union Assembly (B/A/53/1), Berne Union Executive Committee (B/EC/69/1), Nice Union Assembly (N/A/43/1), Locarno Union Assembly (LO/A/43/1), IPC Union Assembly (IPC/A/44/1), Budapest Union Assembly (BP/A/40/1), Vienna Union Assembly (VA/A/36/1), WIPO Copyright Treaty Assembly (WCT/A/23/1), WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty Assembly (WPPT/A/23/1), Patent Law Treaty Assembly (PLT/A/22/1), Marrakesh Treaty Assembly (MVT/A/8/1) and the Beijing Treaty Assembly (BTAP/A/4/1).

3. The list of the members and observers of the Assemblies, as of July 6, 2023, is set forth in document [A/64/INF/1 Rev.](#)

4. The meetings dealing with the following items of the Agenda (document A/64/1) were presided over by the following Chairs:

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 26 and 27	Ambassador Tatiana Molcean (Ms.) (Republic of Moldova), Chair of the WIPO General Assembly
Items 22 to 25	Ambassador Alfredo Suescum Alfaro (Mr.) (Panama), Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee
Item 7	Mercy K. Kainobwisho (Ms.) (Uganda), Vice-Chair of the WIPO Conference, as Acting Chair, in the absence of Shayea A. Alshayea (Mr.) (Saudi Arabia), Chair of the WIPO Conference
Item 14	María Loreto Bresky (Ms.) (Chile), Chair of the PCT Union Assembly
Item 15	Willie Mushayi (Mr.) (Zimbabwe), Vice-Chair of the Madrid Union Assembly, as Acting Chair, in the absence of Philippe Cadre (Mr.) (France), Chair of the Madrid Union Assembly
Item 16	David R. Gerk (Mr.) (United States of America), Chair of the Hague Union Assembly
Item 17	Pascal Faure (Mr.) (France), Chair of the Lisbon Union Assembly
Item 20	Anna Barbarzak (Ms.) (Poland) as Acting Chair, in the absence of Lucía Estrada (Ms.) (Uruguay), Chair of the Singapore Treaty Assembly

5. The agenda, as adopted, and the list of participants appear in documents A/64/1 and A/64/INF/4, respectively.

ITEM 1 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

OPENING OF THE SESSIONS

6. The Sixty-Fourth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies was convened by the Director General of WIPO, Mr. Daren Tang (hereinafter referred to as “the Director General”).

7. The sessions were opened in a joint meeting of all the 22 Assemblies and other bodies concerned by Ambassador Tatiana Molcean (Ms.) (Republic of Moldova), Chair of the WIPO General Assembly.

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

“Honorable Ministers,

“Excellencies,

“Director General,

“Distinguished delegates,

“A very good morning to you all.

“I now call the meeting to order. I am pleased to declare open the Sixty-Fourth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO.

“I am encouraged by the number of delegates attending the Assemblies. As previous years, the Assemblies will be conducted in a hybrid format. Many delegates are present on the WIPO premises while others are joining us online from around the world. A warm welcome to you all.

“We will now start our proceedings. We have a full agenda for the Assemblies and I look forward to your engagement, constructive deliberations and cooperation throughout the Assemblies. I am confident that with your support, we shall keep the spirit of multilateralism robust and the work of the Organization will move ahead.

“I do hope that we will have a successful Assemblies.”

ITEM 2 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. Discussions were based on document A/64/1 Prov.4.

10. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, adopted the agenda as proposed in document A/64/1 Prov.4 (referred to in this document as “the Consolidated Agenda”).

ITEM 3 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

11. Discussions were based on document [A/64/INF/2](#).

12. Introducing Agenda Item 3, the Legal Counsel recalled that at the current year’s Assemblies, Member States were to elect officers, that is, one Chair and two Vice Chairs for each of the 22 Assemblies and other bodies of the Member States of WIPO and of the Unions of WIPO. She also recalled that in accordance with Rule 9(2) of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure, the officers’ terms of office should begin following the final meeting of the session, that is, the present session, during which they were elected and officers would remain in office until terms of office of newly elected officers began. Finally, she pointed out that, with the exception of the WIPO Coordination Committee and the Paris and Berne Union Executive Committees, whose Chair and Vice-Chairs served a one-year term, all officers were appointed to a two-year term. In that regard, the Legal Counsel was pleased to announce that Member States had reached consensus in respect of some of the officers to be elected, adding that the

nominees for the respective officer positions were displayed on the screen and encouraged delegations to submit the remaining nominations and to inform the Legal Counsel accordingly.

13. As there was no objection, the Chair announced the nominees just read out duly elected and informed that the meeting would revert to the agenda item at a later stage.

14. Reopening the agenda item, the Chair invited the Legal Counsel to update delegations on the nominations for the remaining vacant officer positions.

15. The Legal Counsel announced that Member States had reached consensus on the remaining officers to be elected and read out their names, adding that the names were projected on the screen for the delegations' information. The Legal Counsel then announced the conclusion of the nominations for officer positions.

16. The Chair proposed that the Assemblies endorse the nominations as presented by the Legal Counsel, which had gathered consensus among Member States.

17. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, elected their respective officers as appears in document A/64/INF/2.

ITEM 4 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ADDRESS OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO THE ASSEMBLIES OF WIPO

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

“Your Excellency, Ambassador Tatiana Molcean, Chair of the WIPO General Assembly,

“Ministers,

“Excellencies,

“Heads of Delegation,

“Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

“It is an honor and a privilege to welcome you to the [Sixty-Fourth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the WIPO Member States](#), the most well attended Assemblies in the history of WIPO.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Soon after this Administration took office close to three years ago, my colleagues and I worked with all of you on a new vision for WIPO – a vision where every Member State uses IP as a powerful catalyst for creating jobs, attracting investments, supporting enterprises and entrepreneurs, and ultimately for growth and development.

“To make this vision reality, we asked and received your endorsement for our [Medium Term Strategic Plan](#) (MTSP). The MTSP has been our blueprint to transform what IP means, and to map out how we can shift IP from a technical topic of relevance only to IP specialists and experts, to a tool that helps innovators and creators on the ground and from anywhere in the world bring their ideas to life.

“I will describe this shift in numbers and statistics in the course of my address, but I first want to begin by telling the story of one person’s journey, a journey that takes place thousands of miles away from this hall in the rugged canyons of Jordan’s Petra region; a region famous for centuries.

“Madam Ikhlas Al Rawajfeh is from Al Rajef, a village in this part of Jordan.

“Over the last 11 months, she is one of 35 local women entrepreneurs participating in an intensive WIPO training and mentoring program.

“Through this program, we have not only used the power of IP to help the group to brand, market and package their products, we have also made IP part of their daily lives.

“Soon, all 35 are set to benefit from a collective trademark called “Rose Hands”, after how the Petra sky shimmers in the morning light.

“Not only will this protect the group’s unique handicrafts from imitation, but by drawing on the region’s rich history, it will also act as a gateway to new markets and business growth.

“The project is creating impact in other ways as well.

“In addition to being an artisan and entrepreneur, Madam Ikhlas volunteers at the Al-Rajef Association for Special Education, where she uses her crafts to educate and entertain children with learning disabilities.

“Now she is exploring how her IP skills can support the Association to create its own logo, using the practical knowledge of IP that she has gained to help others.

“Her journey is just one of many around the world that WIPO is supporting to bring IP to the grassroots.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Transformations often take place during times of great change.

“Previously, such global disruptions have led to a drop in IP filings and activities. So what was surprising was that during the pandemic, these activities continued to show resilience and growth.

“With the benefit of hindsight, it has become clear that it is not *despite*, but rather *because* of the pandemic that IP moved even closer to the center of enterprises and economies during the past few years.

“Three key trends stand out.

“First, IP filings and innovation statistics continue to perform well, as businesses and economies increasingly look to innovation, entrepreneurship, technology and digitalization – areas connected with IP – to grow.

“Over the past three years, PCT patent filings rose 5 percent to over 278,000. Madrid trademark filings rose 8 percent to 69,000. And Hague design filings rose 15 percent to more than 25,000. Much of this is being powered by the China-Japan-Republic of Korea triangle of growth, but we see increased IP activity in many in other regions of the world as well.

[“Use of both the PCT and Hague Systems reached record levels last year](#), and the caseload before WIPO’s Arbitration and Mediation Center more than doubled, including a surge in domain name disputes.

“One interesting dynamic is that after strong growth in health-related technologies in 2021, digital communication, computer technologies and semiconductors resumed their place as the fastest growing PCT fields last year.

“The trends are similar with Madrid, where classes associated with the pandemic, such as medical instruments declined, while filings linked to the digital economy and retail grew.

“Wider innovation metrics are proving similarly resilient and robust. On September 27, we will launch WIPO’s 2023 [Global Innovation Index \(GII\)](#). This will show that the top corporate R&D spenders increased their expenditure to 1.1 trillion US dollars last year, a new record, and that global venture capital (VC) deals increased by close to 20 percent in 2022, to over 23,000, despite the tough economic environment.

“Second, IP and innovation activity is no longer dominated by one region, but continuing a decades-long trend to become more global, as new growth engines emerge around the world.

“India exemplifies the rise of new players in this dynamic landscape. Until 2006, India filed fewer than 100,000 domestic trademark applications per year. Now, this number stands at close to half a million, with India the fourth largest trademark filer in the world.

“Local patenting activity is also powering ahead. At the last count, India received over 61,000 patent applications, the 6th highest total in the world, and in 2022 India recorded the [sharpest growth of all major PCT filers, with applications rising by more than 25 percent](#).

“From lower bases, Colombia, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico and Thailand are also showing signs of moving in a similar direction, with each country recording increases of at least 17 percent in PCT applications last year.

“[Meanwhile, over the past five years we have seen double-digit increases in Madrid applications](#) from economies as diverse as Bulgaria, Morocco and Viet Nam, with applications from Indonesia doubling, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) tripling.

“[And with designs, the share of applications originating from Asia under the Hague System](#) has jumped from three percent to 23 percent over the past 10 years, with China’s entry last year boosting growth. At the same time, the share from North America also increased from around four percent to over 10 percent during the same period.

“Put simply, this is a world where ideas and IP are emerging from everywhere. A world where Africa and Latin America led the way in terms of VC deal growth last year, with Africa the only region not to see an overall decline in the value of VC investments.

“[Third, in last year’s GII](#), WIPO identified two emerging innovation waves that are beginning to make their presence felt across economies and societies: a digital innovation wave, built on AI, supercomputing and automation, and a deep science innovation wave, built around biotechnologies and nanotechnologies.

“While the rise of new technologies is generating a lot of headlines and attention, it is important to remember that we are still in the early stages of this process and much is yet to unfold.

“But what we know for sure is that future advances, whether in energy, transport, medicine or AI, must reach and work for all.

“That instead of a digital divide, we must use the power of innovation to reap a digital dividend for everyone in the world – where new technologies and solutions create jobs, drive growth and help to build a better, fairer and more equal world.

“While global IP statistics tell an important story, it is also important for us to understand what is in the hearts and minds of people. This is why earlier this year we initiated WIPO Pulse – our first global survey of attitudes towards IP around the world.

“Based on 25,000 responses from 50 countries across all regions of the world, it offers a unique snapshot on global perceptions towards IP rights and the role of IP in the economy.

“We will release the full report in September and hold information sessions, including for Permanent Missions and experts, to socialize key findings.

“But let me give you an advanced preview of some of the main takeaways that are emerging, as these are striking.

“First, while respondents in all regions recognize the positive impact of IP on the economy, this is most appreciated in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa.

“In each case, more than two-thirds of participants – and these are laypersons, not experts – have a favorable view of IP’s impact – higher than in Europe and in North America.

“Second, respondents in all regions see IP as a key tool for ensuring fair income for individual innovators, creators, authors and designers.

“And third, there are strong indications that IP awareness, especially amongst youth, is higher in the global south than in developed countries.

“For example, more than 4 in 10 young people surveyed in Africa and Latin America report a personal understanding of trademarks. In most developed countries, the figure is 2 in 10.

“These figures show that we still have much more to do to connect our work with those on the ground everywhere in the world. But they also present a different picture from the common perception and stereotype that IP is only known and appreciated in the global north, and gives us impetus to work even harder to bring IP to everyone, in every region.

“Excellencies,

“These global trends of IP moving from the periphery to the center of our economies, our societies and our people’s hearts and minds, give us strong affirmation that WIPO’s journey of transformation must continue.

“In doing so, we will build on the work we have started in previous years.

“The [WIPO Performance Report 2022](#) presents a comprehensive view on our achievements over the past year.

“While it is impossible to delve into all of them, I would like to highlight a number of key accomplishments under each of the four pillars and the foundation of the MTSP.

“Pillar one is about communication and engagement. It is about making IP relatable and understandable by everyone.

“To do this, we have focused on sharing stories that demystify IP and bring its impact alive. Drawing on the journeys of people we are supporting on the ground, WIPO has produced more than 160 videos over the past 12 months, including features on Pakistan’s first Metaverse, [3D printed rockets in the United States](#) and [Algeria’s Babar carpets](#). These efforts are connecting our work with new audiences who now see IP in a new light.

“Of course, the right content has to be delivered using the right channels.

“On social media, our followers grew by nearly 20 percent last year to move beyond the 400,000 mark. [Our fastest growing platform is Instagram](#), where about 60 percent of followers are under 34, and the majority are women. We have just launched WIPO’s TikTok channel to reach out to a different demographic and to take on the challenge of making IP dance.

“We have also revamped our website to focus more strongly on the customer journey and to make our content more accessible to you. We are pleased that this work has been noticed and that in the recent World Trademark Review ranking of accessibility of IP websites, WIPO jumped from 49th place to 5th, with page views rising by more than 50 percent last year to almost 60 million.

“Engagement with [our flagship World IP Day campaign](#) also continues to grow. This year’s theme was “Women and IP: Accelerating Innovation and Creativity”, which many of you personally supported and celebrated together with us. We recorded over 40 million impressions across our digital platforms, two and a half times the level last year, and supported more than 400 events in over 130 countries. In all, users from 209 countries and territories participated in the campaign, a record high.

“Pillar two is about bringing people together and partnering with everyone to shape the future of the global IP ecosystem.

“Member States continue to engage extensively and constructively with the vital work of our Standing Committees and Working Groups.

“These committees do not stand still, they engage energetically with issues critical to the future development of IP around the world. As examples, [the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents \(SCP\) will soon gather practical experiences](#) with Standard-Essential Patents and FRAND related issues. Around [80 Member States have engaged with the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks’ \(SCT\) work on nation branding](#). And [the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore’s \(IGC\) renewed mandate](#) comes before you for approval at these Assemblies.

“We are also exploring how novel approaches can inject new energy into longstanding debates.

[“At the last Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights \(SCCR\) meeting](#), we held an information session on music streaming alongside the official Committee agenda. SCCR colleagues have also worked with NGOs and Member States to develop a Toolkit on Preservation, to support lawmakers and policymakers to safeguard the world’s cultural heritage.

“While moving the normative agenda forward is demanding, it is not impossible.

“Last year’s [landmark decision, at these Assemblies, to proceed with two Diplomatic Conferences on the protection of designs, and IP, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge](#) was a major breakthrough in WIPO’s work.

“Since then, we have worked hard to give practical effect to these decisions.

“Our pledge is that we will continue to support negotiators navigate both issues as we build towards the two preparatory committees scheduled for the autumn, as well as the Diplomatic Conferences next year.

“Let me take this opportunity to call on Member States to demonstrate strong political will to cross the finishing line together – as one WIPO community – on these two important issues, so that we can make a difference to the lives of many people across the world who are looking to us for leadership.

“Alongside our normative agenda, we want WIPO to be *the* global forum for discussing IP issues.

“Some of these focus on specific communities, like the work that we do at the WIPO Judicial Institute to bring IP Judges together to help them connect and share best practices.

“But some of our other work in this area is broad and crosscutting. For example, through our seven Conversations on IP and Frontier Technologies, WIPO has established a leading role in broadening understanding of how IP intersects with technologies such as AI.

“Our most recent conversation on IP and the Metaverse, in March, drew more than 4,000 participants from over 140 Member States – two-thirds of whom were from developing countries.

“Our next session will be on IP and Generative AI – a very topical issue that I am certain will generate a lot of interest and participation when it is held on September 20 and 21.

“[Another cutting edge issue is on IP backed Finance](#), with a second High-Level WIPO Conversation scheduled for November after a successful first session last year.

“While we value these discussions, where possible, we want to translate them into practical results and actions.

“This is why we have begun an IP Management Clinic for SMEs active in AI, and will launch a policy guide for IP offices on AI later this year, as well as formed an Expert Consultative Group on IP Valuation.

“As part of this Pillar, we are also committed to Building Respect for IP.

“While a lot of this work centers around helping to develop capabilities in Member States to address IP enforcement issues, at its broadest this work is about helping Member States to build a culture of confidence, respect and, dare I say it even love for IP and innovation.

“That’s why, alongside training and capability building programs with prosecutors, judges, law enforcement officials and others, as well as the growth of WIPO ALERT to almost 11,000 registered domains, we are stepping up the delivery of projects that build respect for IP on the ground.

“Many of these initiatives focus on youth and how we educate our children. To do this, we need to reach out to the youngest with easy-to-understand messages about IP. Over the last decade, with the help of funds from the Republic of Korea, we have developed a set of six animations for children on IP, based on the popular character, Pororo the Little Penguin. The series is now available in nine languages – most recently in Thai – and earlier this year the number of views on YouTube reached 20 million.

“Another important aspect of this work concerns engaging with schools. With ARIPO, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization, we are running IP Clubs that have supported 200 schoolchildren in Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe to learn about the importance of IP rights.

“We encourage Member States to partner with us on more such projects, so that we can help our children and young people understand that IP is part of their journey too.

“As WIPO reaches more deeply into countries and more broadly across the world, delivering through partnerships becomes more critical.

“We are pleased that many of you have supported [our enhanced cooperation with the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization](#) during the pandemic. This led to a number of important initiatives for Member States, including a joint technical symposium on pandemic response, preparedness and resilience hosted by WIPO last December, and the creation of a joint COVID-19 Technical Assistance Platform, which provides Member States with a one-stop-shop for the expertise and resources of all three organizations to deal with IP, health and trade issues.

“Not only has this work been impactful, it has also provided us with a model for interagency cooperation that is now flowing across other areas of our work.

“We are partnering with the International Trade Centre (ITC) on *SheTrades*, bringing an IP component to this program. And alongside UNCTAD and its *eTrade for Women* initiative, we have provided training to over 100 women entrepreneurs in Africa and Latin America on IP rights in the digital economy.

“New partnerships are also being forged, most recently with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), where we will work to bring the worlds of IP and sports more closely so that we can work to support sports associations and athletes to use IP to sustain growth and careers.

“The IP community is a multi-stakeholder community and partnerships with other stakeholders who represent various professional groups – the International Trademark Association (INTA), the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM), the Licensing Executives Society International (LESI), as well as the World Blind Union (WBU)

in [the Accessible Books Consortium project](#) – allow us to draw on expertise, networks and ideas from across a wide range of stakeholders to support a wide range of beneficiaries.

“We welcome more of these partnerships and collaborations so that we can, together, do more for you.

“But perhaps the area where collaboration across agencies can deliver the greatest [impact is around the 2030 Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

“WIPO has entered into our second year as a member of the UN Sustainable Development Group, and it is clear that IP has an important role to play in fueling innovative solutions in our common, global challenges across all 17 SDGs.

“[Momentum in this direction is building](#). We recently held a major international conference on IP and the SDGs in cooperation with Portugal, [published a new report identifying how IP offices are supporting Agenda 2030](#), and announced that the theme of next year’s World IP Day will be IP and the SDGs.

“This is a priority area for us, and when I attend the UN SDG Summit in September, my message to world leaders and the wider UN community will be that WIPO is determined to harness the power of IP, innovation and creativity to bring the SDGs back on track and to build a better, fairer and more sustainable world.

“Pillar three is about providing high quality IP services, knowledge and data.

“WIPO is unique amongst UN agencies in providing services not just to governments and policymakers, but also directly to people and enterprises.

“Delivering value to our users has always been part of our DNA and a key part of our mission and will continue to be so.

“Last year we launched a major initiative across all of WIPO’s fee paying services to transform our Customer Service ethos, experience and approach. This will ensure that WIPO continues to keep pace with the evolving needs of our users around the world.

“We are also exploring ways of harnessing new technologies to make our services more efficient. One example is the work of the Advanced Technology Applications Center, which is embedding AI tools to further enhance our operations, support translation and provide new services for users.

“As well as strengthening our own services through e-filing and other improvements, we will continue to support you as national IP offices to enhance your functionality and infrastructure.

“Over 90 offices are now using WIPO’s IPAS4.0 and IP Office Suite of business software solutions, including 25 in Africa and 20 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“In addition to supporting national IP offices in their work, we continue to provide lawmakers with the data that they need to make informed policy choices around national IP and innovation strategies.

“At the global level, WIPO’s Global Innovation Index is well established as a world-leading resource and reference guide for understanding the state of more than 130 innovation ecosystems around the world.

“And at the more technical level, we have updated [our Patent Landscape Report on COVID-19 Vaccines and Therapeutics](#) to provide further insights on patenting activity related to the pandemic, and to contribute constructively to the important discussions on IP and global health.

“Beyond reports and data, many of you know that [WIPO GREEN is the biggest and most sophisticated climate-tech platform offered by a UN agency today](#).

“It now covers 130,000 technologies from over 140 countries, with WIPO GREEN’s Acceleration Projects helping to advance climate-smart agriculture in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru; boost energy efficiency in China; and support the greening of palm oil production in Indonesia.

“Many of you have asked that we do more in this area. We have certainly heard you, and we will be exploring ways to do so.

“Pillar four is about using IP to drive growth and development.

“As part of our vision in the MTSP of building a more inclusive IP ecosystem, we have transformed how we provide development assistance.

“Of course, our established ways of helping you use IP for development continues to be important.

“For example, WIPO’s legislative support reached close to 60 countries last year, and we helped 25 Member States to formulate, and in many cases, implement, their national IP strategies.

“Our work in building capabilities also continues to grow.

“[The WIPO Academy is now the world’s largest IP training institute and academy](#), training over 1 million people since its inception and over 220,000 people in the last 2 years.

“We continue to evolve and broaden our offerings from more traditional IP courses directed at IP professionals to the imparting of practical IP skills targeted at entrepreneurs, researchers, teachers, and exporters. One of our greatest hits last year was a course directed at IP for Diplomats and Trade Officials.

“Alongside the WIPO Academy, [our network of IP Training Institutes \(IPTIs\) also continues to grow](#). We now have 14 IPTIs around the world, with a further 13 in development including in Algeria, Armenia, Ecuador, Ukraine and Viet Nam. Last year, almost 90,000 participants benefited from IPTI training around the world.

“But alongside these types of established support, we are innovating our development assistance, and using both packages and projects to deliver impact on the ground.

“On packages, during the pandemic, WIPO innovated by creating a COVID-19 Response Package to help Member States tap on WIPO’s expertise on IP and health issues and other issues as well. We are very pleased that 45 countries have tapped on the Covid package, which we will now transform into a recovery package so that Member States can use our services across the whole Organization.

“In Doha this year at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), I announced an LDC Graduation Package to help LDCs that are graduating tap on IP, innovation and creativity as part of their graduation journey.

“On projects, we have launched close to 90 all over the world. Many of them are connected to our work of building a more inclusive IP ecosystem and so the beneficiaries are those who have been underserved in the past – women, youth, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and indigenous communities.

“For example, 120 women from 10 Latin American countries have benefited from our regional programs in support of women entrepreneurs and women in STEM, and we will soon begin the third phase [of our mentoring and matchmaking program for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous and Local Communities](#), which has already touched the lives of over 90 women from over 50 countries. Meanwhile, we have just launched two new projects in support of 65 women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh and Pakistan, building on our successful projects in Jordan, Egypt and Namibia.

“These projects are intense and last months instead of days, because our objective is not to impart theoretical IP knowledge, but to change lives and support livelihoods through IP.

“I am also pleased that this work increasingly has south-south elements as well as inter-regional connections. For example, [we recently launched a project in support of videogame developers](#). While this began life in the CEBS region, interest was such that the network quickly grew to encompass Asia and Latin American game developers as well. So through our projects we are building positive connections across the world.

“We have also stepped up the support we provide to startups, SMEs and researchers.

“Our [WIPO IP Diagnostics Tool for SMEs has been accessed](#) over 22,000 times in the first 18 months since launch, generating 3,000 customized reports for SME owners around the world and translated into 12 languages, with another 7 in the pipeline.

“And over 52,000 SMEs from all parts of the world have benefited from WIPO Academy training over the past two years.

“In the area of technology transfer, we are helping hundreds of thousands of researchers and innovators to protect, manage and create value through our network of over fifteen hundred [Technology and Innovation Support Centers](#), active in over 90 countries.

“Our work on gender remains important. Women make up half the world, but fewer than 1 in 5 inventors listed in patent applications filed before WIPO last year.

“To catalyze action at the global level, on World IP Day this year, we published WIPO’s first ever IP GAP, our [IP and Gender Action Plan](#).

“This will see us generating new data around the IP gender gap, encouraging policy responses at the national and regional levels, and continuing to deliver impact driven projects – individually and in partnership – that support more women innovators and creators around the world.

“Our work on youth has also picked up, with many projects and activities launched or to be launched. Examples include an IP Moot Competition for the first time, a youth IP Business boot camp in Latin America and IP education games for youth in Africa. We intend to gather our work in support of youth coherently through a Youth Action Plan, and we will share this Plan in due course.

“Building a more inclusive IP ecosystem also means connecting more with indigenous communities and helping them to use IP to bring their culture and heritage to the world.

“We are supporting a wide variety of communities including groups in Antigua and Barbuda, Cambodia, Mexico, Oman, Senegal and Togo to protect, brand and commercialize their unique products through IP.

“Projects are also being delivered on IP and Traditional Medicine in Ethiopia. IP and Tourism in Indonesia. And IP and Gastro tourism in Cameroon, Malaysia, Morocco and Peru.

“And as someone who has music close to my heart, work is proceeding on the [WIPO for Creators project](#), our public-private partnership with the music community to help new musicians understand and learn about how to use IP to earn a living and sustain their careers. Our plan is to hold a launch in Geneva later this year, and we invite more partners to join the WIPO for Creators movement.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“This is just a snapshot of the many ways that WIPO is working to support you, and the innovators and creators in your country. I am certain that in the course of this week, you will be engaging with my colleagues on many of the activities and initiatives that are of interest to you, and I welcome you to carry on these conversations.

“The foundation on which our four pillars rest is the organizational strength of WIPO.

“Financially, WIPO continues to be healthy in the face of challenging macro-economic environment. [We ended last year with an overall surplus of 7.7 million Swiss Francs](#), and are projecting a stronger surplus for the next biennium. We will continue to use a results-based management framework, and in this regard, I am pleased to share that over three quarters of our key performance indicators are on track to achieve their biennial targets.

“It is said that culture eats strategy for breakfast. Our transformation of IP around the world is therefore being accompanied by an internal transformation journey at WIPO to build a more open, dynamic, proactive and collaborative work culture. This requires engagement and frank conversations, and this is why we now have a systematic process involving yearly surveys and discussions at all levels to identify and address concerns and engage with our employees.

“We are also strongly aligned with the desire of you to see a more diverse workforce in WIPO, including equitable geographical representation and gender equality. I believe that the two are mutually supportive, and we are committed to moving the needle on this. But we cannot do this alone. Your partnership and interest in this matter, not just during the Assemblies, but throughout the year is critical to our shared objective.

“I also want to thank Member States for your extensive engagement with the [Program of Work and Budget for 2024-25](#). This has enabled us to make strong progress on the vast majority of areas during the recent PBC meetings, with this Budget a roadmap for continuing to raise the bar for what we deliver for you.

“Excellencies,

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Let me conclude by sharing some frank observations as your Director General.

“As the pandemic recedes, new and unprecedented challenges have come to the front. At the same time, there seems to be a deterioration in the multilateral environment in which we collectively operate, and which is so crucial to the resolution of these challenges.

“I therefore want to make an appeal to all of our Member States, to the representatives in this room and beyond, that as your Director General I hope that we can together continue to treasure, uphold and support multilateralism. While it is not perfect, I believe I am echoing the view of many when I say that despite its flaws, we have no better way of ensuring that all of our interests are served, protected and advanced.

“Lastly, let me take this opportunity on behalf of all my colleagues to thank you for your attention, support, encouragement, guidance and advice in our work, and to say that we deeply appreciate your engagement and interest in the transformation of WIPO and the global IP ecosystem.

“Dear Chair, let me wish you all the best as you shepherd us through this year’s Assemblies, and to you and to all Members, we in the Secretariat stand ready to facilitate and support all your discussions in the following days and towards a successful conclusion of the 64th Assemblies of WIPO.”

ITEM 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

GENERAL STATEMENTS

19. The Delegations and Representatives of the following 139 States, (including 13 on behalf of groups of States), seven intergovernmental organizations and 19 non-governmental organizations provided oral or written statements under this agenda item: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia (the), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao (People’s Democratic Republic of), Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, European Union, African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO), League of Arab States (LAS), Patent Office of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf

(GCC Patent Office), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), South Centre (CS), Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN), Intellectual Property Latin American School (ELAPI), International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI), International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC), Knowledge Ecology International (KEI), Latin American Audiovisual Authors Societies Federation (FESAAL), Maloca *Internationale*, Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (ORIGIN), All-China Patent Agents Association (ACPAA), China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), China Trademark Association (CTA), *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)*, Egyptian Council for Innovation and Creativity and Intellectual Property Protection (ECCIPP), Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA), German Association for the Protection of Industrial Property (GRUR), Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA), Korea Intellectual Property Association (KINPA), *Ordre suprême des ancêtres* (OSA) and Patent Protection Association of China (PPAC).

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

ITEM 6 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS

21. Discussions were based on document [A/64/3](#).

22. Introducing Agenda Item 6, the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document A/64/3 and stated that Member States were being invited to consider applications for observer status by six international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and eight national NGOs as listed in paragraph 4 of document A/64/3. The Legal Counsel informed the Member States that in respect of the eight national NGOs, and in conformity with the principles applicable to national NGOs that were adopted by the Member States, the Secretariat held the requisite consultations with the Member State from which the NGO originated prior to the submission of the NGO's request to the Assemblies. She further informed the Member States that the necessary agreement had been received in respect of all eight national NGO applications concerned.

23. The Delegation of China expressed its appreciation to the Chair, the Director General and the Secretariat for their thoughtful arrangements of the Assemblies. The Delegation stated that China had no objection to most of the NGOs applying for observer status as contained in document A/64/3 and wished to see the NGOs play a positive and constructive role. The Delegation, however, pointed out that China could not agree to Wikimedia Foundation becoming an observer at WIPO. In the Delegation's view, the Wikimedia Foundation's projects, including the Wikipedia website, contained a large amount of content and misinformation that violated the one-China principle. Over the past three years, China has stated its position on the organization's application for observer status at the meetings of the Assemblies. The Delegation regretted to see that even though China had repeatedly voiced its concerns regarding the Wikimedia Foundation's application, the Wikimedia Foundation had not addressed these concerns. Given that the Wikimedia Foundation was in serious violation of the one-China principle, as well as of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 2758, and WIPO's consistent position on the one-China principle, China was unwilling to accept the Wikimedia Foundation as an observer. It wished to re-emphasize that the decision on the admission of observers had always been made by the Member States of WIPO based on consensus, and hoped that all parties would continue to follow the principle.

24. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/64/3 and expressed support for all requests therein. It stated that it was

Group B's understanding that all requests for observer status received by the Secretariat contained the requisite information to enable the consideration, and subsequent granting, of observer status. The published requests, in the view of the Group, had complied with all proper procedures. Furthermore, Group B understood that all of the organizations listed in document A/64/3 met the admission criteria and procedures for applying for observer status at WIPO as indicated on the WIPO website. In Group B's view, observer organizations brought technical expertise and insight to the deliberations of WIPO. Group B believed that if organizations were able to show a direct relationship between their objectives and the field of intellectual property (IP), it was important that they were able to observe and to contribute to proceedings. The Group stated that it had been a common practice at WIPO to welcome the involvement of a wide variety of NGOs, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), industry groups and other stakeholders in consultation processes and discussions regarding current IP issues. This had been part and parcel of the transparency and inclusiveness that Member States cherished at WIPO. Group B was not aware of any information that would lead the Group to believe that any of the organizations listed in document A/64/3 would not be able to bring valuable contributions to the Member States' deliberations on current IP issues. Group B therefore urged the approval of the full list of requests for observer status, at the current session, as contained in document A/64/3, in compliance with procedural steps.

25. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) supported the views expressed by the Delegation of China and opposed the request of the Wikimedia Foundation for observer status, adding that this had been the Delegation's position in the past four Assemblies. The Delegation further stated that its view was based on the respect for the one-China principle and the position that WIPO had maintained on the issue. In conclusion, the Delegation wished to emphasize the importance of observing the principle of consensus in such matters.

26. The Delegation of the United States of America thanked the Chair and expressed its support for the statement made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. The Delegation supported the approval of the full list of observer applications and regretted that, for yet another year, China had objected to admitting the Wikimedia Foundation as an observer at WIPO. In the Delegation's view, this was deeply unfortunate as observers were important to the work of the WIPO Committees and the Assemblies as they contributed significantly to debates through diverse and informed views. Their engagement improved discussions in the Assemblies and helped to advance WIPO's activities and objectives. In particular, the work of the Wikimedia Foundation aimed to provide the infrastructure to help disseminate free educational content worldwide. Along with Wikimedia country chapters, the Wikimedia Foundation had a demonstrated interest in copyright issues, a subject of direct relevance to WIPO's work. The Delegation stated that, clearly, the Wikimedia Foundation had a legitimate interest in gaining observer status to the Assemblies and its application should be decided on its merits, and based upon what it could contribute to discussions on IP issues in the Assemblies, adding that Wikimedia's application was strong. In the Delegation's view, Wikimedia should not be denied the status of observer, because one Member State had chosen to politicize the agenda item. The Delegation therefore urged the approval of the organizations as listed in document A/64/3 at the session.

27. The Delegation of Pakistan expressed its appreciation for the introduction of document A/64/3 but believed the concerns expressed by the Delegation of China held merit and, in that regard, requested that the agenda item, as far as it pertained to the organization under debate, be deferred for further deliberation, based on the lack of consensus on the matter. The Delegation expressed its sincere hope that the principle of consensus would continue to prevail in the proceedings of the Organization.

28. The Delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Chair and expressed its gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of the working document. With regard to document A/64/3, the Delegation aligned itself with the position taken by the Delegation of China regarding the

Wikimedia Foundation's request for observer status. The Delegation believed it to be necessary not to grant observer status to entities about which certain Member States harbor doubts or opposition. The Delegation also declared that decisions should be taken on the basis of consensus.

29. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea thanked the Chair and stated that it took due note of the concerns raised by the Delegation of China, which should be respected in WIPO, being one of the specialized agencies of the UN. The Delegation further indicated that there had been the good practice among the Member States of WIPO to take the decisions on the admission of observers by consensus and the Delegation was of the view that this principle should be maintained.

30. The Delegation of Nicaragua thanked the Chair and stated that on behalf of the Government of National Reconciliation of Nicaragua, it wished to call for respect for the procedures regarding the admission of observers to the Organization and the need not to be influenced by organizations that were dedicated to misinformation. The Delegation objected to the Wikimedia Foundation's admission as an observer because it had information on its website that ran counter to the principles of WIPO and the relevant UN resolutions recognizing the one-China principle. It encouraged Member States within the Organization not to admit the Wikimedia Foundation as an observer and to create dialogue and consensus as much as possible.

31. The Delegation of France wished to align itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and stated that it was in favor of granting observer status to all organizations which had submitted a request. The Delegation supported the presence and participation of civil society in multilateral organizations, which played important roles in the dissemination of knowledge, and a significant role in debates on IP. In the Delegation's view, refusal to grant the status of observer to an organization should be based on objective criteria, and not on any political considerations.

32. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Chair and expressed its thanks to the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/64/3. The Delegation concurred with the observation of the Delegation of China that decisions on admission of observers had always been taken on the basis of consensus among Member States and this procedure had to be continued. The Delegation understood the concerns raised by the Delegation of China and supported the one-China principle. Since there was no consensus among Member States on granting observer status to Wikimedia, the Delegation supported the observation made by the Delegation of China and other delegations on the matter.

33. The Delegation of Belarus expressed its support for the statements made by the Delegations of China, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), the Russian Federation, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Pakistan, and Iran (Islamic Republic of). In the Delegation's view, it was critically important to maintain the principle of consensus when taking decisions, including the question of admitting observers.

34. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking in its national capacity, thanked the Chair and expressed its gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of document A/64/3. The Delegation aligned itself with its statement made on behalf of Group B, and supported all the requests for observer status, in particular that of the Wikimedia Foundation. The goal by the Wikipedia Foundation was to promote educational content in Switzerland and the rest of the world. These objectives have a direct link with IP, so Wikimedia can make a significant contribution to WIPO's work. For these reasons, the Delegation fully supported the admission of Wikimedia Foundation as an observer and invited the Member States to accept it.

35. The Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic thanked the Chair, supported the position of the Delegation of China and emphasized that the request for observer status by Wikimedia Foundation had been refused many times as it violated the objectives of the UN. The Delegation noted that it always supported the principle of a unified China, as well as its sovereignty over all of its territories, and recalled the principle of consensus.

36. The Delegation of Zimbabwe observed that its long-standing position was that, in WIPO, decisions had to be arrived at through broad-based consensus. To that end, its Delegation wished that the admission of observer organizations to WIPO be done through a Member State consensus-driven decision-making process and urged all sides to continue formal and informal consultations to address all concerns for consensus to be achieved on the admission of observer organizations.

37. The Delegation of the United Kingdom thanked the Chair as well as the Secretariat for document A/64/3 and supported the statement made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. The Delegation pointed out that observers were important for the activities of WIPO and brought valuable contributions in the deliberations thereof and, believed that all applications should be considered on their individual merits. The Delegation understood that all the organizations listed in document A/64/3 were in compliance with WIPO rules for admission as observers and urged approval of the full list of the organizations.

38. The Delegation of Canada, expressing its support for the statement delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, declared that, like previous speakers, it supported the involvement of NGOs in the work of UN agencies, including WIPO. The Delegation believed that observers enriched discussions within the bodies of the Organization and made important contributions that were different from those of the Member States, in particular, relevant to WIPO for the users of the systems. The Delegation believed that all the applications for observer status should be welcomed.

39. The Delegation of Algeria acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Delegation of China and other delegations regarding the grant of observer status to some of the applicants. The Delegation called for respect for the principal of consensus, which to date, had framed the work of the Assemblies, and urged all delegations to continue in the same manner.

40. The Delegation of China thanked the many delegations for supporting China's position. It also took note that some countries supported the Wikimedia Foundation's request to be admitted as an observer at WIPO, and that those countries gave reasons for their position, which seemed to be reasonable but were not soundly founded. Firstly, the Secretariat only examined the documents provided by applicants but it was for the Member States to take the decision on their admission. In the Delegation's view, this meant that if Member States were not able to arrive at a decision, the organization as such could not be accepted as an observer. Secondly, WIPO as a UN agency is subject to established standards and rules by which it should also abide. In this regard, the Delegation referred to the rules of the UN Charter and other international law as well as the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolutions. In the Delegation's view, the Wikimedia Foundation seriously violated the one-China principle, UNGA Resolutions 2758 and the UN Charter. Thus, in the Delegation's view, the Wikimedia Foundation could not be accepted as an observer in WIPO. The Delegation further stated that observing the rules in a selective way would politicize the issue. It was the Delegation's opinion that some countries had talked about observing the rules of international law each day but that the time had come to test their sincerity. Thirdly, China has consistently supported NGOs in making contributions to WIPO and, in that respect, the Delegation expressed its support for the vast majority of the organizations, whether from developing or developed countries, to be granted observer status but was firmly opposed to the application of the Wikimedia Foundation. The reason for the Delegation's decision was the need for this organization to reflect upon and correct its behavior.

41. The Chair thanked all delegations for their statements and acknowledged the differing views, but noted the desire for consensus by all delegations. The Chair therefore proposed to adopt the decision paragraph as contained in document A/64/3 with the exception of the request by the Wikimedia Foundation.

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

INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

- (i) Digital Music Europe (DME);
- (ii) European Intellectual Property Teachers' Network (EIPTN);
- (iii) Global Intellectual Property Alliance (GLIPA);
- (iv) International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA); and
- (v) *Organisation internationale de l'artisanat* (OIA).

NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

- (i) Bahrain Intellectual Property Society (BIPS);
- (ii) *Centro de Investigación en Propiedad Intelectual* (CIPI);
- (iii) *Compagnie nationale des conseils en propriété industrielle* (CNCPI);
- (iv) CreativeFuture;
- (v) Emirates Reprographic Rights Management Association (ERRA);
- (vi) Intellectual Property Protection Association (IPPA);
- (vii) Korea Institute of Intellectual Property (KIIP); and
- (viii) United States Telecom Association (USTelecom).

ITEM 7 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

COMPOSITION OF THE WIPO COORDINATION COMMITTEE, AND OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF THE PARIS AND BERNE UNIONS

43. Discussions were based on documents [A/64/4](#), [A/64/9](#), [A/64/10](#) and [A/64/12](#).

44. In the absence of the Chair of the WIPO Conference, the Vice-Chair presided over the session and opened deliberations on Agenda Item 7 on the Composition of the Coordination Committee and of the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions. She recalled that there were four working documents under consideration during the session and invited the Legal Counsel to briefly introduce the agenda item as per the working document submitted by the Secretariat.

45. Introducing Agenda Item 7, the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document A/64/4 and recalled that membership of the Coordination Committee was established once every two years, at the ordinary sessions of the Assemblies of WIPO, and consisted of members of the Paris and Berne Union Executive Committees; *ad hoc* members designated by the WIPO Conference, that is, States that were party to the WIPO Convention but not Members of the Paris or Berne Unions; and Switzerland, as the host State, as *ex officio* member. The Legal Counsel announced that the terms of office of the present members of the Paris and Berne Executive Committees and of the Coordination Committee were to expire the current year. Therefore, new members were to be elected during the present Assemblies to serve until the close of the next ordinary sessions of the Assemblies. She noted that, as explained in the working document, the new composition of the Coordination Committee was to consist of 90 members, an increase above the current membership of 83.

46. The Vice-Chair recalled that as indicated in the list of documents, a joint proposal had been received from the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group. She further announced that a second proposal had also been received from the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group and then invited the African Group and the Asia and the Pacific Group to present their document.

47. The Delegation of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, thanked the Vice-Chair for the opportunity to present the joint proposal with the African Group on the Composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee as set out in document A/64/9. The Delegation recalled that, as indicated in the proposal of the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group, equitable geographical representation should be a guiding principle in determining the composition of the Coordination Committee. The Group observed that, regrettably, the current allocation in the Coordination Committee failed to reflect this. Further, the Delegation noted that the analysis conducted by the African Group and the Asia and the Pacific Group, as illustrated in Annexes A and B of the joint proposal, clearly demonstrated an underrepresentation of both the African Group and the Asia and the Pacific Group, as well as other groups in other regions. Thus, one of the main purposes of the proposal was for the allocated seats in the Coordination Committee to better reflect a fair and balanced composition of WIPO's membership in relation to the relative size of regional groups as well as accessions to the Paris and Berne Conventions since 2011. The proposal therefore sought to ensure that every regional group was represented appropriately in line with the principle of equitable geographical distribution outlined in Article 14(4) of the Paris Convention, and Article 23(4) of the Berne Convention. The Delegation affirmed the Groups' belief that the joint proposal was timely and necessary to address the imbalance within the Coordination Committee. By implementing this allocation, the Group noted that WIPO would move closer to achieving a fair and representative composition of its important decision-making body. The Group looked forward to continuing engagement with other groups to find a fair, balanced, and amicable solution to the matter.

48. The Delegation of Ghana thanked the Chair and announced that it was speaking on behalf of the African Group. The Group also wished to thank the Secretariat for preparing document A/64/4, which contained valuable information on the election of the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions and the WIPO Coordination Committee members. The African Group noted that the WIPO Coordination Committee should have 90 members from the close of the present session of the Assemblies to the close of the next ordinary session. The Group recalled that, unfortunately, no agreement had been reached among regional groups on the distribution of seats since 2011. It highlighted that a large majority of WIPO Member States had stressed the need for reforms in the composition of the Coordination Committee to reflect the WIPO membership. The current allocation of seats to each group in the Executive Committees of the Berne and Paris Unions and the WIPO Coordination Committee did not reflect the principle of proportionate or equitable geographical representation of the WIPO membership in the Coordination Committee, which was not in line with the letter and spirit of the provisions in the Paris and Bern Conventions. Given the above, the African Group believed that the only sure way to move towards optimal balance was to allocate the vacancies to underrepresented geographical regions as reflected in the joint proposal of the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group on the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Group therefore called for a better representation of the African Group in the Coordination Committee by allocating, at least, two seats to Africa from the seven available seats, in line with the principle of equitable geographical representation. The African Group reiterated that the balanced and equitable membership of the Coordination Committee was fundamental for the legitimacy of this important Committee and its ability to execute its core mandate. The Group looked forward to constructive discussions on the issue for a positive and mutually agreeable outcome.

49. Speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, the Delegation of Poland said that the Group's members were of the view that there was need for reflection upon the composition of the Coordination Committee. As contained in the CEBS Group's proposal, the membership of this very important body should reflect developments of recent years and be adjusted accordingly. According to the CEBS Group, the six seats allocated to the Group had made it one of the most underrepresented regional groups in the Coordination Committee. This unfavorable situation was further amplified by the enlargement of the CEBS Group in recent years, which had not been reflected in the allocation of additional seats to the Group. Furthermore, all CEBS members had, for a long time, been parties to the Paris as well as the Berne Conventions, meeting this important criterion for membership in the Coordination Committee. At the same time, CEBS Member States accounted for the biggest number of ratifications per country on average. The Group declared that the fact that CEBS members fulfilled the criteria related to Coordination Committee membership, combined with continued growth of registrations made from CEBS countries across various IP systems, necessitated the revision of the decision regarding the composition of the Coordination Committee and an adjustment to the current situation. The Group saw the need for an in-depth discussion relating to the criteria for the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee and, as some of them were no longer relevant, noted that there was a need for inclusive and transparent discussions about redefining the principles underlying the Coordination Committee composition process. The CEBS Group also reiterated the interest of its members to engage in the work of the Coordination Committee and to participate actively in the decisions that were critically important for the future of WIPO and declared that its members were ready to engage in the discussions concerning the composition of the Coordination Committee.

50. The Vice-Chair then invited the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly to provide an update on the consultations regarding the agenda item.

51. The Chair stated that as Chair of the WIPO General Assembly she was mandated by Member States to conduct consultations on the allocation of vacant seats of the WIPO Coordination Committee with the view to reach agreement on the new composition of the Coordination Committee that would be elected at the 2023 WIPO Assemblies. The Chair, in this regard, wished to thank all Group Coordinators that were involved in these consultations for their cooperation and constructive spirit in the attempt to reach agreement. She announced that many proposals were received, not only from the Groups that had just taken the floor, but also from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), as well as Group B. Discussions about the composition and allocation of the vacant seats had taken place with the participation of all WIPO Groups. The Chair said she had been hopeful that she would have been able to report that an agreement had been reached on the composition of the Coordination Committee but, despite the constructive discussions, she announced that consensus on this matter was still beyond reach. At the same time, the Chair noted that there was a strong interest in moving the issue forward and in making progress with regard to the allocation of the vacant seats. She noted that there was still no common position and, in her view, there was need for more vacant seats in order to accommodate the wishes of all delegations. Observing that there were several proposals on the table, the Chair encouraged delegations to continue the consultations and hoped that an agreement would be reached later during this session. She invited Group Coordinators to continue submitting nominations for the seats in the Coordination Committee, based on the existing allocation, and to inform the Legal Counsel accordingly. Consequently, the Chair announced that she would be holding continued consultations during the remainder of the current week and early the following week. The Chair expressed her desire to conclude the consultations on this matter swiftly and assured delegations that she would revert to the agenda item in the first half of the week to come.

52. Thanking the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly for her intervention, the Vice-Chair invited delegations to take the floor.

53. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/64/4 and took note of the joint proposal by the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group contained in document A/64/9, as well as the proposal of the CEBS Group contained in document A/64/10. Group B observed that there had been a series of Coordination Committee expansions in the past and reminded the Assemblies to keep in mind that some WIPO groups benefited from those expansions more than others. Group B observed that some delegations focused on geographical representation as the only criterion whereas, in its view, geographical representation could only be one of the criteria to be considered in determining the allocation of new seats. The other essential criterion that must also be considered was the number of IP filings and registrations. In that respect, Group B highlighted that stakeholders from Group B countries, through their fees, made fundamental contributions to the smooth functioning of WIPO's services and other activities. It was of the view that an allocation of one seat per regional group would seem the most sensible and fair approach and, requested that one of the seven available seats be allocated to Group B.

54. The Delegation of Lithuania expressed its support for the proposal submitted by the CEBS Group, which aimed to address the long-standing issue of an equitable geographical representation in the Coordination Committee. It was a matter of great concern that, despite fulfilment of the current criteria related to the membership in the Coordination Committee, the CEBS Group remained one of the most underrepresented regional groups. The Delegation noted that failure to ensure geographical diversity in decision-making bodies of WIPO undermined the credibility and the further development of the Organization and added that its Delegation was ready to engage constructively in discussions on the issue.

55. The Delegation of Samoa believed that without diversity creativity remained stagnant. If Member States embraced a diverse mixture of voices it would lead to better discussions, decisions, and an outcome that were representative of all. The Delegation noted that, as indicated in Appendix A of document A/64/9, in a fair approach the Asia and the Pacific Group should hold 24 per cent of the seats whereas they were currently only holding 15 per cent. The Delegation further noted that the Africa Group should hold 26 per cent, and yet currently held 19 per cent of the seats and wondered if that was how this body defined diversity. In the Delegation's view, the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group were highly underrepresented in the Coordination Committee. Therefore, it was arguable that very important decisions were made in the interest of a few and were not representative of the majority of WIPO membership. The Delegation said that it was for this reason that Samoa strongly supported the joint proposal made by the Asia and the Pacific Group and the African Group.

56. The Delegation of the Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, stated that it shared the view expressed by other regional groups that the Coordination Committee needed a better allocation of the vacant seats. Calling upon a constructive spirit, and based on the principle of equality between the different groups that should exist in a multilateral forum, GRULAC was pleased to submit a proposal for allocating the vacant seats based on the idea that each regional group should have equal influence in decision-making within the Coordination Committee. GRULAC hoped that Member States could consider the proposal constructively and expressed its willingness to discuss the matter with a view to reaching consensus.

57. The Delegation of Poland said it fully aligned itself with the statement it had just made on behalf of the CEBS Group on this agenda item and expressed support for the statement made by the Delegation of Lithuania. It was the position of the Delegation that there was a strong need to look into the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Delegation understood that there were various criteria, but membership within WIPO Groups was one of the very important elements, especially for the CEBS Group, which has seen its enlargement through the accession of one relatively big country. The Delegation therefore believed that it

was a good moment to have a thorough discussion among Member States about the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee.

58. The Vice-Chair thanked all delegations for their statements and observed that it was clear that the meeting was unable to conclude the item at that moment. She announced that she had been informed that Group Coordinators wished to be given sufficient time to have informal consultations and that they would eventually revert to her and the Secretariat in due time. She promised to keep the plenary informed of developments on the consultations meetings and would revert to the agenda item as soon as possible. The Vice-Chair recalled that the issue had been the subject of long discussions in past Assemblies and during the course of the consultations that had been conducted since then. Noting the fact that there was need to allow for further consultations on the matter and seeing no objection, the Vice-Chair adjourned the agenda item.

59. Reopening the agenda item, the Vice-Chair recalled that it had been opened the previous week and, at the time, Member States had agreed to engage in further informal consultations. The Vice-Chair informed the Assemblies that delegations had been actively consulting on the matter since then and wished to thank Group Coordinators and the delegations involved for their cooperation. She then invited the Legal Counsel to give an update on the agenda item.

60. The Legal Counsel said that she was pleased to announce that, following informal consultations among Member States, there was agreement on the composition of the three bodies concerned. The Legal Counsel recalled that as explained in the working document, the new composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee was to consist of 90 members, an increase above the current membership of 83. However, in the absence of agreement on how to best allocate the seven additional seats of the Coordination Committee, consensus among Member States was that the Coordination Committee should remain, exceptionally, at 83 members. Moreover, there was agreement that the allocation of the vacant seats of the Coordination Committee should be considered further and, in that context, the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly would undertake consultations with Member States on the allocation of the vacant seats with a view to reach agreement at the WIPO Assemblies in 2025. The Legal Counsel stated that an informal document, displayed on the screen, listed the 83 members proposed for the Coordination Committee. The proposal therefore consisted of 41 countries, nominated for membership in the Paris Union Executive Committee, 40 countries nominated for membership in the Berne Union Executive Committee, one *ad hoc* member designated by the Conference, and the host State as *ex officio* member. If approved by the WIPO Conference, the Paris Union Assembly and the Berne Union Assembly, the proposed composition of membership in the Paris and Berne Union Executive Committees and the Coordination Committee would take effect from the close of the present sessions of the Assemblies until the close of the 2025 sessions.

61. Noting that there were no requests for the floor, the Vice-Chair thanked all delegations for their support and the continued efforts made for the successful conclusion of the agenda item, as well as for the cooperation of the Group Coordinators and all the delegations that had been involved in the whole consultation process. Based on the presentation by the Legal Counsel, the Vice-Chair proposed the following decision paragraph.

62. Following informal consultations among Member States,

(i) The Paris Union Assembly unanimously elected the following States as *ordinary* members of the *Paris Union Executive Committee*: Argentina, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa,

Spain, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe (41).

(ii) The Berne Union Assembly unanimously elected the following States as *ordinary* members of the *Berne Union Executive Committee*: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Uganda, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen (40).

(iii) The WIPO Conference unanimously designated the following State as *ad hoc* member of the *WIPO Coordination Committee*: Ethiopia (1);

(iv) The WIPO Conference and the Assemblies of the Paris and Berne Unions noted that Switzerland will continue to be an *ex officio* member of the *Paris Union Executive Committee* and of the *Berne Union Executive Committee*.

As a consequence, the WIPO Coordination Committee for the period starting from the close of the present sessions to the close of the next ordinary sessions of the Assemblies of the Paris and Berne Unions and of the WIPO Conference that will meet in 2025, is composed of the following States:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia (*ad hoc*), Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland (*ex officio*), Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe (83).

63. The Assemblies of WIPO, each in so far as it is concerned, decided that the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly will undertake consultations with Member States on the allocation of the vacant seats at the WIPO Assemblies in 2025, for the election of the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee, and of the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions, at the same WIPO Assemblies.

ITEM 8 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

COMPOSITION OF THE PROGRAM AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

64. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 9 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REVISION OF THE GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURE OF WIPO AND THE SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF WIPO

65. Discussions were based on document [A/64/5](#).

66. Introducing Agenda Item 9 on the Revision of the General Rules of Procedure of WIPO and the Special Rules of Procedure of the Governing Bodies of WIPO and the Unions Administered by WIPO, the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegates to document A/64/5 and recalled that at their Sixty-Third Series of meetings held from July 14 to 22, 2022, the Assemblies decided to modernize the WIPO General Rules of Procedure and adopted various amendments that have since been implemented and were duly reflected in both the WIPO General and Special Rules of Procedure, available on the WIPO website. In the same decision, the Assemblies requested the Secretariat to continue the revision of the General and Special Rules of Procedure with a view to updating language references and proposing other necessary revisions, and to present the proposed changes to the Assemblies at their 2023 sessions. As a result, document A/64/5 proposed amendments to provisions with language references in the General Rules of Procedure and the Special Rules of Procedure in line with the Revised Policy on Languages at WIPO, adopted by the Assemblies during their Sixty-Second Series of Meetings held from October 4 to 8, 2021. The Legal Counsel informed delegations that further to the decision of the Assemblies to request the Secretariat to continue the revision of the General and Special Rules of Procedure, document A/64/5 also proposed additional amendments to selected provisions thereof, which were explained in the document and reproduced in its annexes for the consideration of the Member States. The Secretariat stood ready to continue its revision of the General and Special Rules of Procedure as the need arose and as Member States so requested.

67. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document A/64/5 containing proposed amendments to the General and Special Rules of Procedure of WIPO. For the Group, these amendments reflected contemporary needs and practices at WIPO, which it supported. Group B also welcomed the use of gender-neutral language in the Rules of Procedure and the removal of the reference to the age of the Vice-Chairs in Rule 10(1). The reference to four additional UN official languages, in Rule 40, relating to languages of documents, and the reference to passive interpretation in Portuguese in Rule 41 were appropriately indicative of the diversity of WIPO's membership, and the Group hoped that it would facilitate and strengthen participation. Finally, Group B requested the Secretariat to present to Member States during future Assemblies any proposed revisions to the General and Special Rules of Procedure as this was essential for transparency reasons.

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

(i) adopted the amendments of the respective WIPO General Rules of Procedure and Special Rules of Procedure, as set forth in the Annexes to document A/64/5.

(ii) requested the Secretariat to continue its revision of the General Rules of Procedure and the Special Rules of Procedure as the need may arise, with a view to presenting any proposed change to a future session of the Assemblies of WIPO.

ITEM 10 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORTS ON AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT

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

69. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(ii) Report by the External Auditor

70. Discussions were based on document [A/64/6](#).

71. 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, and I am sorry that on this occasion I am unable to do this in person. Presenting to you is an important part of the governance process, to ensure we are available to you as we highlight the main issues arising from our work, providing you with our independent and objective insight. We were pleased to meet and present in person to the Program and Budget Committee last month.

“In my presentation to you this afternoon, I would like to go over the four main areas of our work, firstly the audit of the financial statements and financial management, then our review of governance and internal control, I will then cover the two substantive performance topics covering estates management, and sustainability reporting.

“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, or validity of the financial statements. Our audit also confirms that the transactions have occurred in line with the Financial Regulations set by you as Member States.

“WIPO’s financial reporting remains of high quality, supported by sound systems of internal control. Our audit results were positive and identified no significant errors or control weaknesses. We have reported the details of our work to the IAOC, with whom we have had a good productive engagement.

“On financial management, WIPO continues to enjoy a sound financial position, this is primarily due to WIPO’s cash generating business model. WIPO holds substantial investments in its property and investments through its retained reserves, which are more than sufficient to meet total liabilities. In this context, we recommend that Member States may wish to review fee levels given the sustained surplus positions and to confirm that these outcomes remain aligned with intentions.

“We continue to highlight the scale of the employee benefit liabilities, predominantly those relating to the staff member’s After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI). During 2022, the overall liability for staff benefits decreased by some 111 million Swiss francs, primarily due to increases in the discount rate for future liabilities; these were due to movements in the financial markets. Assuming current assumptions remain consistent, WIPO forecasts that the liability for the after-service health insurance will increase by 79 million Swiss francs by 2026.

“In response to our previous recommendations on the growth of these liabilities, WIPO commissioned an “Asset and Liability Management (ALM) Study” and we intend to follow-up on any decisions taken by Member States in our next audit. We remain of the

view that opportunities to control costs will always serve as the best mitigation to future risk.

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

“Our audit has continued to conclude that WIPO has sound systems of internal control and no significant weaknesses have come to our attention during the audit process. The Organization continues to be proactive in its approach to internal control, and we have noted further improvements following our report last year, as management better focused compliance and assurance effort on those controls, which were of greatest significance to the Organization.

“Since the start of our mandate, we have advocated the control and efficiency improvements that can be gained by the effective use of data analytics. The concept has been recognized by WIPO, which has been progressing its plan to deliver analytic functionality and to incorporate this within its compliance processes.

“Many of WIPO’s business processes have evolved over time from the historical “automation” of a rules based manual process, which has not focused effort on addressing specific transactional risks. WIPO has started an exercise to review certain business processes. Its review of the home leave travel process identified there was disproportionate effort for relatively low risk and low value transactions. WIPO identified options for either, enhancing the existing process, or changing the basis for the entitlement to simplify the arrangements. We support this type of analysis; it can drive cost efficiencies and ensure greater effort is focused on high-risk areas where business processes may validly require more manual interventions.

“We considered the existing policies related to the Ethics function. Overall, we found that the policies contained the key elements expected in these areas. We did identify however that there were no references to the risks which arise from the very specific nature of WIPO’s operations, namely ethical issues arising from potential or perceived intellectual property conflicts. Given WIPO’s priorities to safeguard intellectual property we found this surprising. We have recommended that WIPO should give more explicit ethical guidance and review the adequacy and extent of current disclosures of staff members engaged in activities where they are exposed to sensitive information. We also consider that the existing financial disclosure arrangements do not fully extend to spouses and close family members, which is a requirement in many other system entities.

“A key source of independent and objective assurance to support the Director General is the work of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD). We have noted there will be a change in the Director position during this year, and it will be an opportunity to consider the future focus of audit effort. This should include reviewing the alignment of IOD’s work with operational risks and key controls, and cost effectively supporting the development of the second line. Future plans should position IOD to deliver on the commitment to provide an annual audit opinion.

“Turning now to our review of estates management, we considered how WIPO is using and maintaining the considerable resources which it has dedicated to its property estate with a carrying value in the financial statements of 344 million Swiss francs. For any organization to demonstrate its effective use of property resources, it is important to have a clearly articulated estates strategy, linked to the overall objectives. This should be supported by a regularly updated operational plan. Given the scale of investment it is

important that WIPO demonstrates it is using the estate efficiently and effectively to deliver its operations.

“While WIPO has detailed multi-year plans to maintain and improve the condition of its buildings, these plans have not been developed within a framework of a clearly articulated estates strategy. It is therefore difficult to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of these resources in the delivery of those objectives. The development of a strategy would provide the opportunity to reflect more fundamentally on the most efficient use of WIPO’s buildings. This is important following the changes in working practices and occupancy levels following the pandemic.

“Developing a strategy could also encompass wider thinking, such as alternative delivery models, outsourcing or delivery from lower cost locations or regional offices. The strategy could also encompass the commitment to sustainability across the estate. The Capital Master Plan anticipates significant investment in the existing buildings in the short term, including major refurbishment of the AB building. In our view, WIPO should develop a comprehensive estates strategy before committing substantial further investment in its existing infrastructure.

“Moving now to our comments on Sustainability reporting, we have reported on WIPO’s commitments to sustainability and how the Organization has highlighted its Environmental, Social and Governance initiatives in its financial report, through its website and other publications to demonstrate sustainability performance. It has also invested in new systems to better capture environmental performance data to facilitate this reporting. WIPO is often a system leader, and we believe there is scope to further develop its reporting of sustainability metrics in its financial statements, prior to the formal introduction of a common reporting framework across the system. In our view, this could form part of a wider review of reporting, which could consider the alignment of the use of resources with high-level performance and delivery metrics within an overall annual report.

“Mr. Chair to conclude, I can confirm that progress has been made in closing seven of our recommendations from previous years, with five recommendations remaining in progress.

“Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the Director General and the staff of WIPO for their support and cooperation in facilitating our audit.

“I would like to thank the Assembly for its kind attention and I would be happy to take any questions or provide further feedback on our audit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.”

72. The Vice-Chair thanked the External Auditor for his presentation.

73. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the External Auditor of the UK National Audit Office (NAO) for the detailed report on the 2022 WIPO Financial Statements as contained in document A/64/6. The Group commented that the report was of great importance and that it had been analyzed carefully. The Group stated that it was pleased to note that six of the twelve open recommendations for 2021, as well as those from earlier years that had remained open, had now been closed. As five recommendations were still open or in progress, the Group strongly encouraged WIPO to pursue quickly with the implementation of those recommendations. Regarding substantive comments, the Group recalled its statement that was delivered to the 36th session of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC).

74. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, commended the External Auditor for his work and thanked him for the comprehensive report and detailed presentation. Furthermore, the Group stated that it had reviewed the report and taken note with satisfaction that the Financial Statements had received a high assessment. The CEBS Group

expressed that it was pleased to hear that WIPO had a sound internal controls and reporting system, which showed that effective governance without any significant weaknesses formed an integral part of the Organization. The Group also welcomed WIPO's continued strong financial performance delivery in 2022, and stated that despite the continued geo-economic and geopolitical challenges, the Organization maintained its strong financial condition and was able to respond to the global economic uncertainty. The Group recognized that the External Auditor's recommendations were well elaborated and encouraged the Secretariat to continue working on their sound implementation. The Group also recalled its statement on that issue at the 36th PBC session.

75. The Delegation of Colombia thanked the External Auditor for his work and for the presentation of the report. The Delegation took note of the report as presented to the Assembly in document A/64/6. The Delegation expressed that it had noticed the conclusion of point 2.20 of the report and the relevance to the UN. The Delegation also took note of the response that had been provided at the 36th PBC session which indicated that the system that was currently built would be operational by the end of the year.

76. The Delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Vice-Chair and commended the External Auditor for the preparation of the External Auditor Report. The Delegation reiterated the need for a regular efficiency review of WIPO's investment policies as it was of the belief that a complete account of potential risks was sine qua non to the Organization's stable financial status. The Delegation expressed that it was hopeful that the Secretariat would fully implement, in a timely manner, the recommendations of the External Auditor.

77. The Vice-Chair thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation for its statement.

78. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, took note of the "Report by the External Auditor" (document [A/64/6](#)).

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

79. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 11 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

80. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 12 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM AND BUDGET COMMITTEE (PBC)

81. Discussions were based on documents [A/64/11](#) and [A/64/7](#).

82. The Chair noted that Agenda Item 12 covered all PBC matters except the Reports on Audit and Oversight, which had been discussed under Agenda Item 10. One document would be considered under the Item, as stated in the "List of Documents," namely document A/64/7, "List of Decisions Adopted by the Program and Budget Committee" which contained decisions taken at the 35th and 36th PBC sessions.

83. The Secretariat stated that two PBC sessions were held in May and June 2023. The 35th and 36th PBC session agendas covered a number of items, including audit and oversight

matters, performance and financial review, planning and budgeting. The agendas also covered items and proposals following decisions taken at the 2022 Assemblies and the 34th and 35th PBC sessions. The 36th PBC session also included the election of officers for the 2024-2025 PBC sessions. Member States had engaged very constructively throughout the PBC sessions and had taken note or had recommended, for approval by the Assemblies, a number of items, as listed in document A/64/7. The Secretariat stated that document A/64/INF/3 Add. provided an update to the status of payment of contributions as of June 30, 2023, and noted that furthermore, since July 1, 2023, contributions had been received from Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, and Gabon, thereby reducing the arrears to just over 9 million Swiss francs. At the 35th and the 36th PBC sessions, the Committee had considered the Draft Terms of Reference of the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices. The Committee had recommended to the WIPO General Assembly that the Draft Terms of Reference of the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices, contained in Annex II to the 36th PBC session "List of Decisions" (document WO/PBC/36/12), be further discussed at the 37th PBC session. In addition, at the 35th PBC session, the Committee had completed a comprehensive review of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and had taken note of 19 outstanding issues for further consideration at the 36th PBC session. Thereafter, at the 36th PBC session, the Committee had reached consensus on almost all outstanding issues, and had decided to refer a few issues to the 64th series of the meetings of the Assemblies.

84. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its statement and recalled that delegations had already engaged very constructively and had ample opportunity to express their views on all those matters at the PBC session which was held just two weeks prior. Those statements at the PBC had been duly recorded and would be reproduced in their entirety in the report. The Chair explained that the Assemblies had a full agenda ahead and requested that delegations give concise statements to avoid repeating statements already given at the PBC. The Chair stated that the PBC had taken decisions and made clear recommendations on all items, except one, which was the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Chair took it that the Assemblies were in agreement with all the other recommendations and stated that she did not intend to return to those agreed items. She pointed out that the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 was the outstanding item that required work by the Assemblies. The Chair appreciated the engagement by Group Coordinators, Ambassadors, and all delegations that had made progress already on the outstanding issues. Based on the discussions held during the 35th and 36th PBC sessions, and noting the comments made under this matter, the Chair understood that there was agreement on the text of the various proposals, however, noted that there were three outstanding issues that required further work. The Chair had been informed that delegations and Group Coordinators had been working very hard to resolve those outstanding issues and intended to refer to those issues at present. Firstly, with respect to financing matters regarding the participation of Member States and Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' representatives at sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) and the Diplomatic Conference, the Chair believed that delegations had made progress on this issue, as she had been informed by certain Group Coordinators and delegations. She then opened the floor to delegations to make statements on this issue.

85. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, confirmed that they had been working intensively but that more time was needed. The Delegation asked if the decision on this Item could be deferred.

86. The Chair asked the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) to clarify if she would be able to report progress on the same day.

87. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, informed the Assemblies that a coordination meeting would take place that afternoon.

Thereafter, it would be able to provide more information. GRULAC asked if it could revert by the next day.

88. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) for the update and moved on to the next outstanding issue, that is, the funding of External Offices.

89. The Delegation of the United States of America recalled its statement at the 36th PBC session reiterating that it was not in a position to recommend the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 for approval. The Delegation expressed its deep disappointment that the proposed budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had not changed. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation continued to rage a brutal invasion of Ukraine and the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25, through its significant funding allocated for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, suggested that the Russian Federation's aggression toward a fellow WIPO Member State was not occurring and that all was business as usual, which it was not. Respect for state sovereignty and equality was one of the foundational principles of the Convention establishing WIPO. The Delegation elaborated that the Russian Federation's actions violated those principles. The Delegation maintained that the budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation should be significantly less than what had been proposed in the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. That External Office had utilized a fraction of approximately 10 per cent of its allocated budget for the 2022/23 biennium. The Delegation stated that the reason for that low rate of utilization was not the pandemic, as was the case with other External Offices, but was the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which had limited the activities of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation.

90. The Delegation of the United Kingdom supported the statement made by the Delegation of the United States of America. The Delegation believed there were substantive grounds to reduce the funding to the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, in light of the underutilization of the Office's budget in the 2022/23 biennium. Considering the need for WIPO to exercise financial prudence in difficult economic times at present, and in light of the actions of the Russian Federation, the Delegation believed it was important to allocate funds appropriately and carefully.

91. The Delegation of Ukraine supported the statements made by the Delegations of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for their hard efforts in preparing the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation was also pleased to recognize the work of WIPO's management in ensuring the financial stability of the Organization in such a challenging geopolitical environment. The Delegation reiterated its support for the statements made by delegations at the 36th PBC session regarding the reduction of the budget of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. It stated that the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine continued to cause profound damage and destruction to the Ukrainian nation, its cultural heritage, intellectual and creative potential. The wrongful acts committed by the Russian Federation had undoubtedly affected the distribution of WIPO knowledge and projects as well as the utilization of the outcomes of the External Offices activities. The Delegation called for the immediate termination of funding for the projects in the Russian Federation, specifically the financing of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. It emphasized that this should be considered an interim and ardent measure, as the only viable way to restore justice would be to fully close the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. The Delegation believed that this practical solution would not only allow WIPO's finances to be better directed towards achieving the SDGs, but would also prevent the Russian Federation's actions to justify and support its military aggression through WIPO resources and global IP services.

92. The Delegation of Belarus stated that proposals to reduce the financing of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation were not supported by properly grounded arguments, which would back-up that proposal and implementing it. The Delegation believed that there were no grounds for it and that the proposals were pushed by certain Member States of WIPO who were, unfortunately, pushing their own political ambitions and agenda. It believed that any politically motivated proposals put forward in international organizations, including WIPO, were unacceptable. Furthermore, in the Delegation's view it was WIPO putting this forward and added that this matter did not concern the Russian Federation in WIPO, but was about the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. The Delegation stated that those supporting the proposals were undermining the Organization as such, by breaking up its network of External Offices. This proposal would not only harm WIPO, and infringe its mandate, but it would damage positive work that had been done over many years. It would also be an act of discrimination against many ordinary people who were creators and innovators. The Delegation concluded that the proposals were completely unacceptable and that it could not agree with it.

93. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, thanked the PBC Chair and Vice-Chairs for their efforts to reach an agreement on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The CEBS Group agreed that the Program of Work and Budget needed to be aligned to WIPO's values and vision, which were reflected in the MTSP Plan of 2022-2026. The CEBS Group reiterated its support for the position expressed by some Member States on the proposals to reduce the budget of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. It stated that the mission and goals of the External Offices were very much inscribed in the main vision and aims of WIPO to contribute to the growth of a healthy IP ecosystem globally. The deliverables of a WIPO External Office, hosted by a country that not only violated international law, but also deliberately caused severe damage to one of the WIPO Member States and continued to do so, should be perceived as questionable. The Delegation and the CEBS Group recalled that it had not received more detailed information about the operations of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation despite several requests. The CEBS Group believed that there was no objective reason to base the proposal of the Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 on 2021 provisions. The CEBS Group concluded that as the Russian Federation continued its unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, not sparing civilians and civilian infrastructure, therefore business as usual in cooperation with any of the UN affiliated international Organizations was not an option.

94. The Delegation of China stated that budgeting for the WIPO External Offices was a highly technical matter. It should fully consider the operation of the External Offices as well as the opinions of the hosting country. It was inappropriate to discuss budget cuts for a particular Office. At the same time, it would also have a negative impact on the WIPO External Office network. The Program of Work and Budget was the foundation of WIPO's operations, as well as of the role of WIPO to lead a multilateral effort to ensure the implementation of strategic planning. The Delegation hoped that stakeholders would consider the long term of WIPO and constructively engage in the Program of Work and Budget, to ensure that discussions were technical and non-political.

95. The Delegation of Lithuania aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and Poland. The Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation found no justification based on the questionable operational effectiveness of this entity and its contribution to the implementation of WIPO's mandate. In addition, the general principle of law stated that no one could benefit from its own wrongdoing. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine was in violation of the UN Charter and UN principles and the values of humankind. At the same time, the Russian Federation had unleashed a war on intellectual property rights (IPRs). The Delegation believed that the most appropriate solution to address the deteriorating situation was

to close or relocate the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, following prospective precedents in other international Organizations in Geneva.

96. The Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed its support for the statements made by the Delegations of Belarus and China. The Delegation believed that there was no justification to reduce the allocations for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. A reduction would affect the overall budget, the activities and the personnel of External Offices. The Delegation stated that WIPO External Offices should undertake a non-political function and that the budget should not be reduced for political reasons.

97. The Delegation of Germany agreed with the Delegation of the United States of America's assessment that the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation was currently underutilized due to the Russian Federation war of aggression in Ukraine. Further, recent Russian legislation and decrees had undermined the protection and enforcement of IPRs for foreign right holders in the Russian Federation. Therefore, funding of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation should be adjusted.

98. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recognized that WIPO's External Offices, including the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, played an important role as the bridge between WIPO and its Member States. The Delegation expressed that the proposal to reduce the budget of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation was unreasonable and unjustifiable, and clearly this issue was being fully politicized. Accordingly, the Delegation opposed the proposal to reduce the budget of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation.

99. The Delegation of the Russian Federation stated that it had not used its right to raise a point of order in order to respect other delegations and to save time, but some of the Member States had not shown the same level of respect towards other delegations. Those Member States continued to repeat unfounded politically motivated accusations that had nothing to do with WIPO's mandate and urged that this kind of behaviour should be prevented. The Delegation stated that there were no legal grounds for reducing the funding of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. It noted that politically motivated assessments had been made by a certain group of countries, who were not the majority and did not represent the opinion of the Organization, even though they were trying to pretend the opposite. The Delegation reiterated that legal grounds for the reduction of the budget to the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation did not exist adding that according to the assessments made by the External Auditor, the budget for the External Offices was not excessive. It was a standard figure which had always been used for the financing of External Offices, and was covered in the accounts. Those had not been questioned at any time in the course of the relevant session and apart from politically motivated statements, there were no grounds for such a decision. The Delegation urged WIPO to refrain from politicizing its work, from letting it be politicized, and from letting its decisions be motivated by politically motivated assertions made by a limited group of Member States.

100. The Delegation of Latvia aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania and Germany. The Delegation was unclear what was meant by lack of argumentation by many Member States, and what was meant by political statements, because those statements made were about simple facts. It could not be disputed that there was actually a war against Ukraine. It was not a political statement made by any of these Member States to state what had happened to the IP system in Ukraine because of that. The discussion was on the underutilization of budget in the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation in the current biennium. Outside that argument, there should be sound arguments as to why a budget allocation was needed, if for certain reasons, it had been underutilized. As mentioned by the Delegation of Poland, detailed information on the funding of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had been

requested. The Delegation stated that there were no clear reasons to maintain the financing of the budget. The Delegation believed that the focus should not be on arguments of political nature, or why there were requests for the reduction of the budget, but that there should be arguments on why the budget should stay the same, and those were not clear. The Delegation concluded by reiterating that it aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania and Germany, and it dissuaded that discussions be focused on whether there were political statements, or whether the statements were fact based or not, and called for clear arguments as to why the budget should remain as it was.

101. The Delegation of Estonia aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Germany and Latvia.

102. The Delegation of the Czech Republic recalled that there had been a comment that there were a limited number of delegations supporting requests to reduce the budget of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. Its Delegation agreed with the proposal to reduce the budget in the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation.

103. The Chair stated that there was no agreement on that outstanding issue. The Chair elaborated that divergent views had been expressed by several delegations as some called for closing the External Office, others proposed reducing the budget, and others proposed to keep the existing budget. The Chair encouraged delegations to work with each other to make progress on this outstanding issue and emphasized that she stood ready, with the support of the Secretariat, to facilitate the work of the delegations. The outstanding issue would remain pending. The Chair moved to the third outstanding issue, and noted that there were some concerns on the budget related to the Lisbon Registry.

104. The Delegation of the United States of America reiterated that it had addressed its concerns regarding the Lisbon Union, including the proposed increased budget on July 10 under Agenda Item 17, and during the 35th and 36th PBC sessions. The Delegation noted that those statements were on the record and did not want to repeat them. The Delegation looked forward to hearing how the Secretariat and Lisbon members would address the Delegation's concerns on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget.

105. The Delegation of Portugal, speaking on behalf of a cross-regional coalition of African, Asian, Latin American, and European countries, recalled that during the 35th PBC session, the coalition had clearly expressed the need for an increased budget for the Lisbon System. The coalition welcomed and supported the increased budget for the Lisbon System in the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. As compared to the Program of Work and Budget for 2022/23, the Delegation had emphasized the need for an appropriate increase in resources, including adequate staffing, in order to improve the capacities in the Lisbon Registry, to urgently address the current backlog in geographical indication filings and address other deficiencies. The increase was also needed to address the anticipated workload resulting from the growing membership, the delivery of technical assistance, the full deployment of the functionalities of the new IT platform, e-Lisbon, and the updating of the Lisbon Express Database. The Delegation stated that the growing membership of the Lisbon System required much more resources than under the 2022/23 biennium and stated that many of the coalition members were concerned about the slow response by the Lisbon Registry to its requests. The Delegation believed that this situation would deteriorate if the Program of Work and Budget was not increased for 2024/25 and invited the Lisbon registry to share its views about the potential consequences of a stagnating budget for its operational activities. It recalled that it had heard concerns from one delegation about the proposed increase of resources for Lisbon promotional activities and it underlined that these activities aimed at ensuring the adequate implementation of the treaties covered under the Lisbon System for existing members, as well as to provide information to

countries on their requests. The Delegation invited the Lisbon Registry to explain what was included under its promotional activities.

106. The Delegation of Cambodia endorsed the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition. As a least developed country, the Delegation placed great value in geographical indications to bring IP benefits to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and grassroots communities for their economic development and job creation, to work towards poverty alleviation in rural areas by all means so that no one was left behind. The Delegation called for Member States and the Secretariat to increase the Lisbon budget to address the current challenges and backlogs of the Lisbon System. Doing so was crucial for the Lisbon System to be effective, efficient and responsive to meet the needs of the current increasing membership. Improving the Lisbon System would facilitate the Delegation's upcoming application to register under the Lisbon System smoothly and, in a timely manner.

107. The Delegation of Italy aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition. The Delegation expressed satisfaction with the proposals on the allocation of income and expenditure for the Lisbon Union as described in Annex IV of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. At present, resilience should be the collective priority, which was the reason that WIPO actions addressed to value and protect small businesses that were the most vulnerable players in the economic system, particularly in rural areas, should be encouraged. The Delegation believed that the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 was aligned with this goal and reflected the expectations for further increase of the Lisbon Union's membership. Resources were necessary in order to enable the Lisbon Registry to perform effectively in its core services and activities. Hence, in the interest of WIPO Member States and IP users, in this regard, the impact of future inflation should be considered. Furthermore, the Delegation highlighted that the estimated increase in income of the Lisbon Union, deriving from its own fees, was indeed a positive indicator and it took into serious consideration WIPO's long-term financial sustainability. The modest deficit of the Lisbon Union did not represent a threat for an organization, which had an ongoing substantial surplus and a balanced and comprehensive budget. In conclusion, the Delegation supported the adoption of the proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 on the basis of the long-standing principle of financial solidarity among the different WIPO Unions and confirmed its commitment to ensuring equal treatment for all IPRs.

108. The Delegation of France supported the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal, on behalf of the cross-regional coalition and it also fully supported the budget proposed for the Lisbon System. The Delegation stated that the budget was justified by the increase in the number of tasks required by the service for the registration and operations under the Lisbon System, and that there had not been an increase for many years. As pointed out, the increase in the budget was because of the need for managing all of these transactions, as the result of new Lisbon members and its Delegation believed it was important that WIPO had the means to administer these registrations.

109. The Delegation of the Russian Federation was delighted that they had acceded to the Lisbon System in 2023 and had become a full participant in all WIPO international registration systems. The Delegation fully supported the initiative taken to increase the budget of the Lisbon System for 2024/25 because those funds would be necessary for the further development of the Lisbon System, to attract new users, and expand its membership. The Delegation believed that it was justified to approve this budget to ensure a smooth functioning and development of the Lisbon System.

110. The Delegation of Ghana stated that the African Group saw the merits in the improvement of the finances allocated to the Lisbon Registry, especially considering that there had been more accessions to the Lisbon System.

111. The Delegation of Tunisia stated that it had been a recent signatory of the Geneva Act, on July 6, 2023, and underscored the importance of strengthening the Lisbon System by providing it with the necessary financial and human resources. The Delegation welcomed the increase in the budget for the Lisbon System for 2024/25, because increasing the budget would enable the Lisbon Registry to respond more effectively to the increasing number of applications from Member States.

112. The Delegation of Switzerland strongly supported the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition and also supported the statements made by members of the coalition. The Delegation believed that it was vital to increase the human and financial resources in order to improve the current and future functioning of the Lisbon Registry and to provide members with the level of services they have a right to expect from a global system of registration and protection administered by WIPO. The Delegation concluded that it supported the budget proposed for 2024/25.

113. The Delegation of Slovakia aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition. The Delegation saw the merits and supported the increased budget for the Lisbon System. It was necessary to improve the capacities in the Lisbon System to handle its growing membership, address the current backlog in geographical indication filings, and to prevent similar backlog issues in the future. The Delegation concluded that to realize these objectives, more resources were required.

114. The Delegation of Peru supported the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition and expressed support for the increased budget for the Lisbon System. An increased budget was essential to ensure that the System could operate efficiently and meet the growing demand for assistance made to it. The Delegation stated that it had added to that demand by recently joining the Lisbon System. The Delegation noted that there had been support for the increased budget from several countries that indicated how membership had been increasing. This required commitment from WIPO to ensure that the Lisbon System could continue to provide high quality services to all its members, especially those from developing countries. One of the four pillars of the MTSP 2022-2026 stated that WIPO should provide high quality IP services and that was not possible if the System did not have the necessary resources. In order to drive a wider and more effective use of IP, all WIPO's services must be of high quality. The Delegation urged that the proposed increased budget to the Lisbon System be approved.

115. The Delegation of Georgia fully supported the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. Geographical indications played a significant role in economic development of the Delegation's country as well as regional economic development. An increased budget for the Lisbon System would be beneficial, not only for existing Lisbon members but for potential ones. The Delegation reiterated its full support for the proposed budget increase for the Lisbon System and endorsed the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition.

116. The Delegation of Hungary fully supported the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition and endorsed the views expressed by like-minded delegations. The Delegation believed that the proposed increased budget of the Lisbon Registry would be essential to ensure the functioning of the Lisbon System.

117. The Delegation of Niger supported the statement made by the Delegation of Portugal on behalf of the cross-regional coalition and also expressed support for an increase for the Lisbon System to ensure it could operate properly and provide high quality services to its current and future members.

118. The Delegation of the Czech Republic supported the increased budget proposal for the Lisbon System.

119. The Delegation of the United States of America requested that an outstanding question from a delegation on the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation be addressed. The Delegation recalled that a number of delegations had asked a very pertinent question. The Delegation had asked for the justification for that External Office's budget being five times larger than what was utilized in the 2022/23 biennium and requested to know what activities justified that budget.

120. The Delegation of the Russian Federation did not understand why one delegation had brought up External Offices' financing to link it to the outstanding issue on the Lisbon System in the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation stated that the document did not include information or provisions concerning the budget for External Offices for 2024/25 and reiterated that it did not understand what kind of expenditure was proposed to be cut back on in the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation stated that in 2022, in conditions of global, legal and other unpredictability including unilateral coercive measures, none of the WIPO External Offices had managed to fully use the budget that it had, and that included the WIPO Coordination Office in New York. The Delegation added that unpleasant politically motivated statements and comments had been made on this proposal. It pointed out that concerning the 2022 figures on expenditure unrelated to staff costs, the WIPO Coordination Office in New York had spent only 280,000 Swiss francs out of 724,000 Swiss francs for the period 2022/23. However, in the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25, the budget for the WIPO Coordination Office in New York had been increased to 732,000 Swiss francs. Following the logic of delegations making this proposal, the budget of the WIPO Coordination Office in New York should be 560,000 Swiss francs. The Delegation could not comprehend the proposal and did not consider it acceptable to take a selective approach to the financing of WIPO External Offices, including the WIPO Coordination Office in New York, which the Delegation regarded it as double standard.

121. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) believed it was not appropriate to jump from the Lisbon discussion to another issue which had already been discussed and to link those issues. The Delegation supported the Lisbon budget and, at the same time, believed that WIPO External Offices undertook fully technical work and should not be affected by politicized considerations.

122. The Chair took note of the statement made by delegations and urged the delegations to consult with each other to reach consensus on the three outstanding items. The Chair was relatively optimistic that consensus could be reached on the three outstanding issues, and that good progress would help to advance on this agenda item. The Chair encouraged Group Coordinators to facilitate reaching agreement and would await for Group Coordinators to inform her when they were ready to move ahead with this agenda item.

123. Reopening Agenda Item 12, PBC Report, the Chair recalled that discussions had been held when the agenda item had been opened earlier on during the WIPO General Assembly in plenary. The Chair had been informed that there had been good discussions and progress made on resolving the open issues and opened the floor to delegations for comments.

124. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, stated that considerable progress had been made on the GRULAC proposal. GRULAC had held consultations with delegations and had sent a draft text to them for their consideration. GRULAC stated that there was consensus from all delegations on the proposed paragraphs that could be included in the Decision of the 'Report on the Program and Budget Committee'. The first paragraph referred to the Secretariat continuing to provide assistance for the participation in the IGC of delegates from eligible Member States by providing the necessary

financing. The second paragraph referred to the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the Diplomatic Conference on an exceptional basis and its Group had taken into account all the points that had been made on that matter. The third paragraph stated that, with respect to the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in special sessions of the IGC, this would continue to be financed through the WIPO Voluntary Fund. GRULAC proposed that the relevant text could be displayed on the screen at a time the Chair deemed appropriate.

125. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, echoed the earlier statement by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, concerning the joint proposal from GRULAC and the African Group. The Group was pleased that an agreement had been reached on the proposal.

126. The Chair thanked the delegations for reconfirming their commitment and for the hard work that had been done to resolve the outstanding issues.

127. The Representative of the Native American Rights Fund - National Congress of American Indians thanked GRULAC and the African Group for their proposal for the exceptional funding from WIPO's budget to support the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the 2024 Diplomatic Conference and thanked all Member States for their support. The subject matter, under discussion by the IGC and at issue in the upcoming Diplomatic Conference, went to the very heart of Indigenous Peoples' cultures and lifeways. Indigenous Peoples had rights to their traditional knowledge (TK), including TK associated with the use of Genetic Resources (GRs) and associated IPRs, as had been recognized in Article 31 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As the subject matter of the Diplomatic Conference had a direct impact on Indigenous Peoples' IPRs, WIPO Member States must act to ensure Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation, in accordance with Articles 18, 19, 31, and 41 of the Declaration. As was widely acknowledged, any treaty or other instrument resulting from the Diplomatic Conference could only have legitimacy if it was developed with the participation of Indigenous Peoples. In this regard, in its report of its 22nd Session held in early 2023, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues had specifically called upon WIPO and its Member States to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in its meetings, including the Diplomatic Conference in 2024 and related preparatory meetings. The convening of the Diplomatic Conference would necessarily entail significant expenditure by WIPO and the participating Member States. Providing funding and taking other steps to facilitate Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation was not only consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but was also a wise investment that helped to ensure that all the efforts and resources put into convening the Diplomatic Conference could have a successful, legitimate outcome. The Representative was pleased that Member States had reached an agreement on funding for Indigenous participation and looked forward to discussing further aspects of Indigenous Peoples' full and effective participation in the Diplomatic Conference, including through the adoption of Rules of Procedure during the Preparatory Committee meeting in September 2023 that would fully reflect the unique status and interests of Indigenous Peoples in these negotiations.

128. The Representative of MALOCA Internationale supported the statement made by the Native American Rights Fund – National Congress of American Indians. The Representative recalled their previous statements at various WIPO meetings where they had mentioned that convening a Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources without ensuring a broad geographical spread of participation among the seven geo-cultural regions, would have been an illegitimate attempt to overcome this problem. The seven geo-cultural regions had tried to resolve this issue when taking part in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York. It believed that representatives of Indigenous Peoples needed to take part in the Diplomatic Conference otherwise, it would not be seen as legitimate. The expert meeting that was to take place in Geneva the following week would be

looking at that matter. The Representative stated that WIPO had been part of the UN System since 1974 and therefore, WIPO was obliged to follow Article 41 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which stated, “The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations System and other intergovernmental organizations shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, *inter alia*, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of Indigenous Peoples on issues affecting them shall be established.” The Representative hoped that Indigenous Peoples, particularly from least developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries, could take part in decision-making on GRs and TK because the decisions would affect them as well.

129. The Chair thanked the delegations for the good progress made on the outstanding issues to reach consensus on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. She explained that the Secretariat would need a brief period to draft a decision on Item 12.

130. The Delegation of the United States of America expressed its profound disappointment that its concerns regarding the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had not been addressed. However, the Delegation would not stand in the way of consensus in approving the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation reaffirmed its strong desire to resolve issues, even difficult ones, by consensus, for the sake of the long-term health of the Organization. Therefore, the Delegation disassociated itself from consensus on the WIPO General Assembly’s approval of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and reiterated its deep concerns about the proposed increase of the Lisbon Union budget.

131. The Delegation of Poland reiterated its position concerning the need to reduce non-human resources for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation because the current situation had made it impossible to adequately utilize the budget allocated to the Office in 2022. The Delegation fully acknowledged the importance to reach an agreement on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and understood that this matter, as it was one of the few outstanding issues, should not stand in the way of concluding on provisions based on the broad consensus among WIPO members. The Delegation would therefore accept the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 with the current proposal of resource allocation for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation on the understanding that this issue was subject to further assessment and evaluation, including in the context of geo-economics and geopolitical risks that could impact the operations of External Offices.

132. The Delegation of Ukraine expressed gratitude to the Secretariat and distinguished delegates for their dedicated efforts to present the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and extended its appreciation to the Chair for her leadership in guiding the Assemblies’ deliberations. The Delegation dissociated itself from the consensus regarding the approval of the budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. Its Delegation would continue to look very closely at the activities of that Office in the future, in order not to allow an aggressor State to exploit WIPO’s resources and global IP services to justify and support the Russian Federation’s military aggression against Ukraine. The Delegation believed that the non-personnel budget that had been allocated to the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation was inflated and urged the Secretariat and Member States to exercise caution in the distribution of these funds. It therefore advocated for continuous monitoring and swift response to the allocation of this budget, particularly in light of the ongoing war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Delegation requested that their concerns be placed on the record and reiterated its firm stance regarding the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, emphasizing the imperative closure of the Office. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation had blatantly violated WIPO’s principles and its statutory obligations, and did not deserve the privilege of hosting a WIPO External Office.

133. The Delegation of the United Kingdom expressed its disappointment that the budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had not been further reduced. The

Delegation believed that the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation's high budget was unnecessary for an External Office that had clearly been unable to utilize it fully in previous years. However, its Delegation wanted to see an Organization with clear financial direction and with financial clarity. With that in mind, and as the Delegation believed in an exercise of constructive cooperation, it would not stand in the way of consensus to allow for the adoption of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25.

134. The Delegation of Croatia expressed its disappointment with regards to the decision on Item 3, Admission of Observers. The Delegation believed it to be a rather routine and technical matter on the agendas of other international organizations. With wide public accessibility to the majority, if not to all of the documents, as well as widely available online participation to the majority of meetings of WIPO bodies, the status of 'observer' had a more symbolic rather than practical importance. The Delegation pointed out that one delegation had strongly opposed to grant the observer status to one of the proposed organizations on the grounds that this organization published information that was contrary to a UN Resolution, regarding the sovereignty and territorial matters of this Delegation's state. Several other delegations had supported this delegation, echoing the need for observing international legal norms and UN Resolutions. It observed that there was one WIPO Member State that had been violating the basic principles of international legal order and the UN Charter, which had been explicitly confirmed by the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1, as well as in five other related UN Resolutions. The violation of the basic UN principles by this Member State had been occurring for more than 500 days. However, Member States that had invoked principles of international legal order concerning the observers did not see any problem that this specialized UN organization had an Office in this particular Member State. The Delegation recalled that hosting a WIPO External Office was neither a right of a WIPO Member State, nor a precondition for cooperation with WIPO or for receiving technical assistance. On the contrary, only a handful of Member States had a WIPO External Office and added that for many years, a number of other Member States had endlessly negotiated about where the next WIPO External Office should be established. The Delegation recalled that the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had been established under non-transparent circumstances, which had led to the proliferation of requests for opening WIPO External Offices. Therefore, in light of commendable concerns from some Member States to observe international legal order and UN resolutions when it came to observer organizations, they should apply the same high standards in the case of Member States observing international legal order and UN resolutions. The Delegation called for the closure of the operations of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation and for the redeployment of its staff and financial resources to existing or new WIPO External Offices. The Delegation considered it unacceptable that a UN agency had an External Office in a Member State that violated basic UN principles and called for other Member States to consider the closure of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation.

135. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea deeply regretted the lack of constructive discussion in recent years concerning the opening of new WIPO External Offices. The Delegation strongly believed that WIPO External Offices were WIPO's extended arm, and that WIPO Member States should facilitate the use of the global IP system and promote innovation activities by opening new External Offices that could adequately meet the needs of global IP system users. The Delegation emphasized that with the stagnation of the discussion, it was time to take a new, clear and definitive approach by decoupling the discussion on the opening of new External Offices from the evaluation of the existing External Offices. This had been proposed by the distinguished Delegation of India at previous PBC sessions to achieve progress and effectively fulfil the responsibility.

136. The Delegation of Germany was disappointed that funding for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation had not been reduced. The Delegation, however, assigned a very high value to the principle of consensus and therefore agreed with the adoption of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25.

137. The Chair thanked all the delegations for their statements. While good progress had been made to reach consensus on the outstanding issues, the Chair noted that some delegations expressed disappointment, disagreement, and disassociation from a part of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Chair was pleased that there was support for the adoption of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and requested a short break to allow the Secretariat to circulate the proposed decision on Item 12 to all delegations.

138. The Chair read out the proposed decision on Item 12, which was adopted.

139. With respect to all matters under this agenda item, except for the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/25 Biennium, 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” (documents WO/PBC/35/7 and WO/PBC/36/12); and
- (ii) approved the recommendations made by the Program and Budget Committee as contained in the same documents.

140. With respect to the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/25 Biennium: The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned:

- (iii) approved the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the biennium 2024/25 (document A/64/11);
- (iv) emphasized that, in line with the mandate of the GA 2021, the Secretariat shall continue to assist the IGC by providing Member States with necessary expertise and funding, in the most efficient manner, for the participation of experts from developing countries, countries in transition and LDCs, taking into account the usual formula for the IGC;
- (v) agreed that, on an exceptional basis and subject to the approval of the list of invitees in the Preparatory Committee of the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources, WIPO will provide adequate funding to facilitate the participation in the Diplomatic Conference of 2 representatives of Indigenous People and Local Communities from each sociocultural region used by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues. The funding will be provided by WIPO’s Voluntary Fund and, in case of insufficient resources, through the budget allocated to the Diplomatic Conference. The modalities of allocation for such funding will follow the rules of WIPO’s Voluntary Fund;
- (vi) noted that, participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities representatives in regular sessions of IGC will continue to be funded by the WIPO Voluntary Fund and Member States’ direct funding of such representatives;
- (vii) requested the Secretariat to conduct outreach to encourage all Member States to contribute to the Voluntary Fund and/or directly fund participation of the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities’ representatives;
- (viii) emphasized the importance of financial prudence in the prevailing context of global geopolitical and economic volatility;
- (ix) requested the Secretariat to continue its close monitoring of program implementation and budget utilization during the biennium 2024/25, across the Organization, and to adjust budget allocations accordingly as relevant.

141. The Delegation of Croatia expressed its discontent with the outcome of the deliberations. However, since its concern was not related only to the budget issue, it would not stand in the way of accepting the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation requested its statement to be reflected in the General Report of the Assemblies and asked that this issue be considered on the next occasion when the question of WIPO External Offices would be addressed.

142. The Delegation of Australia strongly supported progress on the work of the IGC and considered that participation of Indigenous Peoples' was key to ensure the legitimacy of the IGC's work. The Delegation thanked all delegations for their constructive engagement to find a solution to provide funding from WIPO's budget to support Indigenous Peoples' attendance at the upcoming Diplomatic Conference. This would provide greater certainty in regards to indigenous participation. It was also important to ensure Indigenous Peoples' participation at the upcoming Special Session of the IGC and Preparatory Conference. The Delegation thanked the Delegation of Germany for their recent contribution to the WIPO Voluntary Fund and encouraged other Member States to consider contributing to the WIPO Voluntary Fund.

143. The Delegation of Sweden thanked the delegations for their flexibility and constructive work. The Delegation was pleased that the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 had been approved. It was important to have clear, robust and transparent systems. The Delegation stated that ideally each respective Union should be self-financed. A transparent accounting system was of utmost importance so that the economic development of each system could easily be followed. At the 2017 WIPO General Assembly, the Delegation had raised concerns in relation to the Lisbon Union, which had still not been addressed. The Delegation remained positive that the members of the Lisbon System were willing to find a long-term solution to make the system financially sustainable.

144. The Delegation of China addressed the Delegation of Croatia's remarks on the issue of the admission of observers. The Delegation believed that in the framework of the Program of Work and Budget, discussing any issue related to observers exceeded the mandate of this meeting. The Delegation stated that some delegations had made statements contrary to reality regarding the admission of observers and recalled that some delegations had expressed concerns related to observers. The WIPO General Assembly had reached a decision on the basis of the consensus on that matter, and the Delegation urged delegations to respect that decision. The Delegation reiterated that it had explained its positions on both the issue of the admission of observers and on the issue of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and wondered whether some delegations had closely followed the discussions. The principles and the purposes of the UN Charter and international law should be respected and followed and if some individual countries were still not clear about the Delegation's position, they should consult the meeting record on WIPO's official website. The Delegation stated that it had always advocated that all parties should consider the whole picture, including the common good and sound development of WIPO. The Delegation stated that some countries making accusations against other countries should reflect on themselves and their own actions.

145. The Delegation of Canada supported the decision on the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the 2024 IGC Diplomatic Conference. The Delegation felt that the decision had struck the right balance between the exceptional nature of the proposition in question, and the importance of having the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the room at the Diplomatic Conference that pertained to them. This was key for the legitimacy of the Diplomatic Conference's work and eventual outcome therefore the decision required flexibility from all involved. The Delegation was very pleased that delegations had been able to come together on this issue and also thanked the Delegation of Germany for the contribution to the WIPO Voluntary Fund and looked forward to further contributions.

146. The Delegation of Ukraine recognized the significance of the decision and pledged its support for further work towards its implementation. Despite a clear interest in addressing certain outstanding issues, the Delegation had not broken the consensus out of respect for the efforts of the distinguished delegates and the Secretariat. The Delegation requested that its statement, delivered earlier that day regarding the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, be reflected in the Assemblies General Report.

147. The Delegation of Lithuania aligned itself with the statements by delegations who had expressed concerns on the proposed budget for the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, which found no justification based on the operational effectiveness of the entity, and its contribution to implement WIPO's mandate. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine was in blatant violation of the UN Charter, UN principles, and values of humankind. The Russian Federation had unleashed a war on IPRs and closure of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation would have been the most appropriate solution. At the same time, the Delegation respected the principle of consensus on this important matter.

148. The Delegation of Latvia supported the statements made by the Delegations of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland and Lithuania. The Delegation also supported the statement by the Delegation of Croatia. The Delegation stated that it honestly could not put into words its dissatisfaction with the fact that the adopted Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 showcased that the Organization, which had very high standards, did not care that one of its Member States clearly was disregarding international rules and regulations. The Delegation believed that hosting a WIPO External Office was a privilege that should not be granted to a country that blatantly violated international law and did everything possible to hinder the provision of support to the country where they were waging a gruesome war. It did not leave a good aftertaste. The Delegation asked if Member States and WIPO wanted to associate with and support that. The Delegation supported the decision on the Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 which contained necessary activities that had to be done but urged not to forget about the topic of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. The Delegation emphasized that the approach should be re-thought in the future and then thanked everyone for the good work done.

149. The Delegation of Brazil thanked the delegations, the Secretariat, and the Chair for the way in which they had worked to reach agreement on the GRULAC proposal to finance the representatives of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at the IGC on GRs, TK, and Folklore. The convening of the 2024 Diplomatic Conference was an important step to ensure there was a more inclusive and broader participation from those who were directly responsible for the preservation and the conservation of global heritage. In an ever-changing world, this collective work ensured that there was legitimacy to ensure that there would be greater global governance of GRs and associated TK through increasing the access to these resources and through patents. An important international instrument was an important step in this negotiation process. The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) System would be strengthened if there was a balance between the users and the rights holders of GRs. It was important to strike a balance between the global IP system and humanity's ability to keep creating and innovating in a sustainable and progressive manner. This would thus align WIPO's mission to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: a balanced and effective global IP system, which recognized, above all, that this sector played a crucial role in certain aspects, for example economic development, equality and well-being, as well as health.

150. The Delegation of the Russian Federation stated that at the 35th and 36th PBC sessions and at the current 64th Assemblies, they had witnessed purely politicized discussions on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Delegation did not believe that delegations had provided solid and financially balanced arguments to underpin their claims that the financing of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation should be reduced. The

Delegation had heard repeated baseless claims that the 2022/23 budget had been underutilized and how that should impact the planning of future implementation. The Delegation recalled its earlier statements that underutilization of funds had been recorded in all External Offices, including in the WIPO Coordination Office in New York. The suggestion to reduce financing had only been made with respect to the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation. The Delegation believed that this was politicized and created a double standard. The Delegation was not entirely satisfied with the draft decision, nor with the content of the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 as a whole. It was supposed to contain methodology for the calculations regarding WIPO's proposed expenditure, inflation assumptions, and a detailed picture of staffing, including post levels, staffing numbers, and other important parameters on which the budget proposal was being made. Despite the fact that none of this information had been included in the document despite repeated requests, the Delegation had shown a constructive attitude, had met the Secretariat, and had agreed to accept the Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 in this proposed form. The Delegation requested that future Proposed Program of Work and Budgets be prepared taking into account the comments the Delegation had made.

151. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Chair for her leadership and the Secretariat for always quickly responding to GRULAC's questions. GRULAC thanked the delegations for their contributions and involvement over the previous days to guarantee the presence of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at the Diplomatic Conference. GRULAC thanked donors who had contributed to the WIPO Voluntary Fund and encouraged other delegations who had spoken that day to do the same.

152. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, expressed its satisfaction with the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25, and thanked the Secretariat and delegations for their constructive work. The CEBS Group recalled the statements made by CEBS countries during the PBC meetings in which they had requested more detailed information regarding the operations of the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation, information which it had not yet received. The CEBS Group noted that they would continue to request such information in the future.

153. The Delegation of Poland requested that its statements with regard to the WIPO External Office in the Russian Federation be put on the record.

154. The Delegation of Chile thanked the delegations for their collaborative spirit, which had enabled agreement on the proposal put forward by GRULAC and the African Group to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities could take part in the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. The Delegation thanked delegations that had contributed to support their participation.

155. The Chair thanked the delegations for their statements and appreciated their work done at the 35th and 36th PBC sessions and the 64th Assemblies to reach consensus on the outstanding issues in the Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25. The Chair acknowledged the difficulty in agreeing to budget-related issues in WIPO and in other organizations. She had hoped that the outstanding issues would have been resolved during the PBC sessions but that had not been the case. The Chair announced that she had partaken in a meeting with the PBC Chair and delegations to discuss how to, in the future, they could better prepare to reach an agreed proposal, one that would have been discussed at the specialized, technical level. The Chair thanked the delegations for their constructive engagement and celebrated that on the issue of financing of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' representatives at the IGC, consensus had been reached.

ITEM 13 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORTS FROM WIPO COMMITTEES

(i) The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR)

156. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(ii) The Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP)

157. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(iii) The Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT)

158. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(iv) The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) and Review of the Implementation of the Development Agenda Recommendations

159. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(v) The Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC)

160. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(vi) The Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

161. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

(vii) The Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE)

162. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 14 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

PCT SYSTEM

163. See the report of the session of the PCT Union Assembly (document [PCT/A/55/4](#)).

ITEM 15 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

MADRID SYSTEM

164. See the report of the session of the Madrid Union Assembly (document [MM/A/57/2](#)).

ITEM 16 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

HAGUE SYSTEM

165. See the report of the session of the Hague Union Assembly (document [H/A/43/2](#)).

ITEM 17 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

LISBON SYSTEM

166. See the report of the session of the Lisbon Union Assembly (document [LI/A/40/2](#)).

ITEM 18 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

WIPO ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTER, INCLUDING DOMAIN NAMES

167. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 19 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

PATENT LAW TREATY (PLT)

168. See the report of the session of the WIPO General Assembly (document [WO/GA/56/14](#)).

ITEM 20 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

SINGAPORE TREATY ON THE LAW OF TRADEMARKS (STLT)

169. See the report of the session of the Singapore Treaty Assembly (document [STLT/A/16/2](#)).

ITEM 21 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY SECTOR AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEM

170. Discussions were based on document [A/64/8](#).

171. The Chair opened Agenda Item 21, Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation, and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System, and invited the Director General to present the agenda item.

172. The Director General indicated that following the decision of WIPO Member States at the last Assemblies on Agenda Item 19: Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System, the Secretariat conducted the requisite assessment, engaged in consultations, implementation and other activities as requested by Member States. The Director General stated that through the gathering of data and evidence, as well as the collection of anecdotal evidence from respondents, the Secretariat set out how the invasion of Ukraine had significantly affected Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem. These impacts included infrastructure damage, reallocating financial resources towards national security and defense priorities, social damage, mental health consequences, and brain drain. The Director General noted that data showed damage to the IP ecosystem, including a decline in filings: Ukrainian applications to the PCT had been down by one third last year and the Secretariat recorded a 20 per cent fall in international trademark applications under WIPO's Madrid System. On the other hand, the innovative sector and ecosystem showed resilience and adaptability. As reported, while the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell, information technology (IT) service exports grew and despite the circumstances, new Ukrainian

start-ups had joined the ranks of global unicorns. The Director General underscored that WIPO had continued cooperating closely with Ukraine to deliver assistance and support. The Director General noted that areas where support was most needed had been identified together with Ukraine, and activities focused on concrete and tangible results, including the provision of access to information and technologies, legislative advice and support for IP training institutions, had been provided. The Secretariat had also been ensuring that IP applicants from Ukraine, as well as the country's IP Office, continued to have access to the full range of WIPO's services. The Director General added that in addition to relief, recovery, restoration and rebuilding have been discussed. The Director General noted that the assessment undertaken and the needs identified would be instrumental in ensuring that WIPO's support would be directed where most needed. Moreover, The Director General added that on Saturday, a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Ukraine was signed that would guide the collaboration in the years to come. The Director General indicated that as stated in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) country report of Ukraine, the Ukrainian economy faced exceptionally high uncertainty associated with the scale, duration and intensity of the war. Similarly, this could further impact the scale of damage to the innovation and creative ecosystem. The Director General noted that the assessment also provided insights about how war in general impacts human innovation and creativity, and reiterated that peace was the only environment to nurture an ecosystem that benefited everyone everywhere. The Director General then turned the floor to the Director of the Transition and Developed Countries (TDC) Division, to provide an overview of the key takeaways of the assessment, consultations, implementation and other activities related to the assistance and support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system as requested by Member States.

173. The Secretariat extended its gratitude to the Director General for setting the stage for the important agenda item and provided the details of the report. Firstly, the Secretariat noted that in terms of assessment methodology, questionnaires, interviews, desk research, and data analysis had been used. Approximately 100 stakeholders had actively participated, providing valuable insights into the situation on the ground. The process included the preparation and collection of surveys from key stakeholders, such as government authorities responsible for the protection and enforcement of IP, education and research institutions from different regions of the country, technology and innovation parks, startups, IP associations, and practitioners, representatives of creative industries, namely artists, performers, musicians, publishers, collective management organizations, as well as the Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs). The Secretariat added that the International Bureau also consulted and reviewed publicly available sources, including official reports of international and regional organizations and institutions such as the UN, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank, national government authorities and official webpages of relevant stakeholders and summaries and reports of research centers. The Secretariat shared that the findings from the assessment showed that the war had significantly affected Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector. Among the most significant impacts of the war on Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem, the Secretariat enumerated the negative effect on the mental health, performance and well-being of students, educators, creators, scientists, and researchers; brain drain - many creators, educators, scientists, and researchers have left the country leading to a loss of human capital and shortage of skilled professionals; filing decreases - all international filings under the PCT, Madrid and Hague Systems relating to Ukraine, as well as national filings have experienced significant decreases; creative industry losses; infrastructure damage and limited financial resources; resilience and adaptability – nevertheless, governmental institutions continued to operate and reacted to the challenges by undergoing structural optimization, launching initiatives and devising strategies to support and protect the IP, creativity and innovation sectors and attract international partners. The Secretariat took the opportunity to thank all stakeholders who, despite the circumstances, provided their feedback for the

preparation of the report. Secondly, the Secretariat informed that consultations were continuing, maintained, and initiated with Ukraine to understand their specific needs related to the innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem, involving exchanges of letters, communications at all levels, and virtual and in-person meetings held in Geneva with the relevant governmental stakeholders from Ukraine. The Secretariat reported that over 25 online and in-person consultations in Geneva had taken place, involving relevant governmental stakeholders from Ukraine, including the Ukrainian Intellectual Property Institute (Ukrpatent), Ukrainian National Office for Intellectual Property and Innovations (UANIPPIO), the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine and the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office in Geneva. Further, the Secretariat underlined that all WIPO sectors had been involved in the process. The Secretariat informed that based on the consultations, current and future needs were identified. Thirdly, the Secretariat stated that the consultations were instrumental in paving the way for implementing technical assistance, legal assistance, capacity building, and other forms of support to restore and develop Ukraine's IP sector and ecosystem. The Secretariat reported that it had prioritized activities with concrete impact, focusing on rebuilding a stronger IP ecosystem that benefited all stakeholders. The requested activities were initiated and remained ongoing as part of WIPO's support to Ukraine. The Secretariat shared that the activities had been aimed at supporting governmental institutions, including UANIPPIO, the TISCs network, IP Training Institutions, the legal and enforcement system and the users of IP services in Ukraine. The activities undertaken and ongoing included: provision of access to information and technology to support the business continuity and development of UANIPPIO and other governmental institutions; provision of policy and legislative advice, particularly on the development and implementation of the new national IP strategy, copyright law and bylaws and collective management system of Ukraine; support for IP business development of UANIPPIO; IP Training Institution; IP enforcement and alternative dispute resolution policy and outreach activities; support and assistance to government institutions, SMEs, creators and inventors in identification, valuation and benefit from their IP, as well as capacity building through participation in projects, training programs and workshops for various stakeholders from Ukraine. The Secretariat reported that for the implementation of the decision, it had ensured adequate financial and human resources through reallocation within the approved Program of Work and Budget for the implementation of technical and legal assistance, capacity building and other support for Ukraine, as appropriate and as required for the restoration and rebuilding of Ukraine's IP sector and ecosystem. The Secretariat pointed out that these latter activities were aimed at building a stronger IP ecosystem that benefited stakeholders through the development of a comprehensive and impactful national IP strategy, providing financial relief to IP ecosystem users in Ukraine through free access to specialized patent information programs, and strengthening the potential for government institutions in Ukraine to benefit financially through enhanced future management of government-owned IP rights through an IP audit project. As to WIPO services, the International Bureau ensured that IP applicants from Ukraine, as well as UANIPPIO, continued to have access to the full range of WIPO's IP services and that measures had been put in place to grant appropriate extensions, exemptions and other remedies as provided for in relevant WIPO treaties, rules and regulations. The Secretariat ensured that appropriate measures had been undertaken regarding Ukraine and the International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority under the PCT and deployment of online filings, and ePCT filings. The Secretariat informed that it helped to facilitate the business continuity of UANIPPIO and supported the deployment of online filing by the preservation of Office users' accounts and access to WIPO services. Finally, the Secretariat reiterated the International Bureau's commitment to support the IP ecosystem in the country and assist in rebuilding Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector, which had been significantly impacted by the war. The Secretariat highlighted that the signing of the MoU on cooperation in the sphere of IP between WIPO and Ukraine, which had been based on the findings of the report, provided an important framework for cooperation to ensure that WIPO's support and assistance yield concrete benefits for creators, innovators and members of the IP community suffering the impact of the war. The

Secretariat expressed readiness to provide any additional information requested by Member States.

174. The Delegation of Ukraine expressed its sincere gratitude to the Director General, for his exceptional leadership in the preparation of the report and for his statement. The Delegation also extended thanks to the Deputy Director General in charge of the Regional and National Development Sector, for his support as well as to all the departments of the International Bureau for their tremendous efforts in this endeavor. In particular, the Delegation acknowledged the remarkable facilitation, balance, and objectivity demonstrated by the Director of the TDC Division, throughout the assessment process. The Delegation expressed heartfelt appreciation to all the distinguished WIPO Member States that co-sponsored and supported last year's decision on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and IP System, as outlined in document A/63/8. Ukraine drew strength and determination from the overwhelming support and solidarity expressed by Member States during these Assemblies. The Delegation underscored that the report effectively focused on mitigating the adverse effects of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and emphasized the importance of rebuilding an innovative and creative ecosystem in Ukraine. Moreover, it highlighted the adaptability and viability of the Ukrainian economy, underscoring its strengths in digitalization, SME endurance, and the potential of its human resources and noted the inclusion of vital aspects such as mental health and the losses faced by the creative industry in the report. The Delegation stated that beyond the numerical figures, it was crucial to recognize the profound and enduring impact of the war of aggression against Ukraine on its people's ability to create and work. The Delegation indicated that the broader perspective helped to understand the daily context within which Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system operated. Nevertheless, the Delegation declared that while the report represented a thoroughly objective and well-researched assessment, it could not be considered complete and comprehensive. It further noted that this limitation was not a reflection on the International Bureau but rather an unfortunate consequence of the ongoing aggressive war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. As long as the Russian Federation's troops remained within Ukrainian territory and continued to target civilian objects with their missiles, this report could only conclude with an ellipsis. The Delegation emphasized that the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine had meant, above all, loss of life and livelihoods, and stated that just a few days ago, while esteemed Member States made their general statements, the Russian Federation's missiles had struck the city of Lviv, located a mere 50 km from the Polish border, causing the deaths and injuries of dozens of Ukrainians. It noted that behind every decreasing percentage and number in the report, behind every source and calculation, laid the shattered lives of individuals. Its Delegation addressed the distinguished delegates because it laid partly within the power of delegates to ensure that these opportunities were not lost forever. The Delegation firmly believed that through close collaboration with WIPO and its esteemed Member States, Ukraine would be able to counteract the significant damages inflicted by the Russian Federation's aggressive actions on Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system. In this regard, the knowledge, experience, and resources of WIPO and its esteemed Member States would be invaluable in assisting Ukraine. Therefore, the Delegation requested the consideration of extending grace periods for Ukrainian applicants, facilitating access to global IP services and knowledge sources, assisting internally displaced persons from Ukraine, and engaging in programs to support Ukraine's innovation, creativity, and IP system. The Delegation acknowledged that the actions in support of Ukraine were an investment in a sustainable and peaceful future for innovation and creativity globally and invited other delegations to join them in further efforts to isolate the Russian Federation from affecting international platforms and decision-making within these esteemed walls. The deliberate actions of the Russian Federation officials to exploit WIPO's resources in legitimizing the temporary occupation of Ukrainian territory or to harness WIPO's resources and expertise to strengthen their armed aggression must be stopped. The Delegation stated that only through unity and courage in the face of this threat, the high goals and mission of this Organization

could be achieved, for the threat posed by the Russian Federation had long transcended national and regional boundaries and had become a global concern.

175. The Delegation of Poland, delivering the statement on behalf of the CEBS Group, thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for preparing the report concerning Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System contained in document A/64/8. The Delegation stated that the report confirmed a significant negative impact of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, that was reflected not only in the unprecedented damage to the infrastructure of scientific, educational, research and cultural institutions, but most importantly in the loss of the potential and capacity of stakeholders of the Ukrainian IP ecosystem. The Delegation underscored that the wide-ranging negative effects of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, from the deteriorated mental health of the IP stakeholders, the brain drain caused by the humanitarian crisis, amplified by the infrastructure damage as well as reduced financial resources, were subject to serious concerns for CEBS countries. The reported decrease in the number of filings, as well as losses incurred by the Ukrainian creative industry were clear evidence that the continued the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine overshadowed international efforts aimed at supporting economic growth and development, also through IP. Further, the Delegation emphasized that taking into account the detrimental effects of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, it would take years, decades, if not longer, to recover the pre-war dynamic growth of innovation infrastructure and potential of the Ukrainian IP system. The Delegation indicated that international support and assistance was more than needed in these extraordinary circumstances. It welcomed all of WIPO's efforts aimed at supporting and delivering assistance to Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector presented in the report. The Delegation added that WIPO's continued cooperation with Ukraine to assist members of the Ukrainian IP stakeholders with an aim to adequately mitigate the adverse effects of the unprovoked and unjustified war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and rebuild its creative ecosystem was necessary. As the Russian Federation continued its illegal, targeted and unprovoked attacks against civilian infrastructure, the Delegation reemphasized the necessity of the international community to take any possibility to support the Ukrainian people in addressing the negative and long lasting effects of this war. In conclusion, the Delegation, on behalf of the CEBS Group, reminded all WIPO members of their obligation to respect international law. The Delegation recalled that the UN General Assembly resolution ES-11/1 which deplored in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as UN General Assembly resolution ES-11/4 condemning attempted illegal annexation of Ukraine's territories, had clearly identified the Russian Federation's gross violations of international order. The Delegation regretted that despite all resolutions and condemnations, the Russian Federation had continued such violations until today. The Delegation assured that the CEBS Group stood with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people as long as it took.

176. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and IP System (document A/64/8) and the Director General for presenting it. The Delegation welcomed the analytical outline of identified challenges made in the report and noted the detailed list of support activities undertaken and envisaged by the International Bureau. The Delegation also noted the tremendous detrimental impact of the war on the innovation and creativity sector in Ukraine and the continuing damage to the IP ecosystem, decrease in IP filings, and loss of income for innovators and creators. The Delegation requested more information on how the Secretariat intended to prioritize the multitude of activities listed and described on page 20 and the following pages, whether the Secretariat had identified any activities or issues that could be addressed first, and how the overall security situation in the country affected the planned technical assistance. The Delegation expressed considerable interest of Group B in following up on these developments.

177. The Delegation of Spain, delivering the statement on behalf of the European Union and its member states, reiterated the persistent support and solidarity with Ukraine, which was facing a continuous war of aggression of the Russian Federation for more than one year. The Delegation called on the Russian Federation to immediately cease all violations of international law, instantly and completely withdraw its troops from the whole territory of Ukraine, and to fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. The Delegation underlined that Ukraine was now a candidate country for the membership of the European Union. The Delegation stated that the European Union and its member states welcomed the Director General's presentation of the report and WIPO's commitment to continue to implement technical and legal assistance, capacity building, and other support for Ukraine, as appropriate and as required for the restoration and rebuilding of Ukraine's IP ecosystem. The Delegation stated that the Report left no doubt about the significant negative consequences on the Ukrainian IP ecosystem of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. The Delegation acknowledged WIPO being the best place to address the IP-specific implications of the war, as well as to assess and provide the assistance necessary for the restoration and rebuilding of Ukraine's creative industry and its IP system. The Delegation noted that the continued adequate and timely support and assistance of WIPO to the innovation and IP ecosystem was necessary to mitigate those impacts. The Delegation concluded that the report showed clearly that the proper implementation of the provisions of the decision taken at the WIPO Assemblies last year on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System continued to be key to ensuring adequate support to the efforts of the Ukrainian communities, aimed at restoring operational and adequate functioning of the IP ecosystem.

178. The Delegation of the United Kingdom thanked WIPO for the Report on Assistance and Support to Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System. The Delegation applauded WIPO for reacting to the devastating and illegal war in Ukraine. The Delegation stated that WIPO had taken valuable actions to detail the impacts and provide support for Ukraine's innovation and creative sector and IP system setting a path towards recovery. It referred to the statement of the Delegation of Ukraine noting that, since the Russian Federation's illegal and unjustified invasion, Ukraine had suffered attacks on its buildings and infrastructure, which had a devastating impact on its economic activity, and use of IP. The Delegation noted from the Report, the impacts, such as the toll on mental health, brain drain, infrastructure damage, funding cuts, filing decreases and creative industry losses. The unjustified actions of the Russian Federation stood in clear contradiction to WIPO's mission to promote IP to improve the lives of everyone everywhere. The Delegation commended and offered solidarity with the staff of Ukraine, who had been working incredibly hard in difficult circumstances to continue to deliver important services to their citizens. Its Delegation was pleased to see that the report provided a clear mandate for WIPO to continue its important work to support the operation and long-term recovery of the IP ecosystem of Ukraine. The Delegation called on WIPO not to lose momentum but to continue to provide assistance to Ukraine's innovation and creative system and ecosystem. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its transparency and looked forward to further updates on the implementation of the resolution and thanked WIPO Member States for standing in solidarity with Ukraine in this critical time.

179. The Delegation of the United States of America referred to the somber and tragic fact that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine still continued, nearly a year after the Assemblies had called for this report. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation's attacks on Ukraine had damaged every sector and facet of society, with no one and nothing being spared, including Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem. It drew attention to the stark numbers and noted a litany of destruction and lost opportunities for Ukraine - 350 educational institutions had been destroyed and thousands more damaged - as reported by the International Bureau. The Delegation referred to the reported damage to nearly 120 scientific and higher education institutions as well as 253 cultural sites, four scientific institutions that had been completely destroyed. The Delegation referred to the

details of the report on the losses beyond physical destruction, such as the toll the Russian Federation's war had taken on the mental health of Ukraine's students, educators, creators, scientists and researchers, and diminishing resources available for the education, science, and creativity sectors, because Ukraine was forced to channel more and more funding into defending itself from the Russian Federation's aggression. The Delegation noted that the Russian Federation often claimed that to discuss the impact of its brutality was to politicize this and other technical institutions. The Delegation stated that standing up for the fundamental tenants of the UN Charter was not a political act but rather a profound responsibility of everyone. The Delegation declared that the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine threatened all aspects of their fellow Member State, including their activities in and contributions to WIPO. The Delegation stated that the Report made crystal clear today's Agenda Item was not about politicization but about the generational damage the Russian Federation was inflicting on Ukraine's vital innovation and creativity sectors. The Delegation referred to the report's examples of devastation, diminishment and loss to Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector. The Delegation acknowledged that Ukraine was bearing the full brunt of the Russian Federation's violence, but the loss was theirs as well, as they were being robbed of the full force of Ukraine's inventiveness, creativity and contributions to the Organization. It thanked the Director General and International Bureau for researching and drafting this report and looked forward to further reporting. The Delegation hoped that by the time the Assemblies would convene next year the Russian Federation would have stopped its aggression and withdrawn its forces from Ukraine and the Ukrainian partners were able to contribute fully to WIPO through unhindered innovation and creativity.

180. The Delegation of Japan appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat for the report summarizing its activities to assist and support the Ukrainian innovation and creativity sector and IP system, and perceived the report as a response to the decision adopted last year. The Delegation welcomed the commitment of the Secretariat to continuing its close cooperation with Ukraine, as stated in paragraph 116 of the document. The Delegation mentioned that as clearly captured by the report, the creators, innovators and members of the IP community in Ukraine had been severely damaged by the unjustified and unprovoked aggression by the Russian Federation. The Delegation urged ensuring the ongoing support and assistance that provided concrete benefits and impact, focusing on mitigating the adverse effects of the war and rebuilding an innovative and creative ecosystem in Ukraine that benefited all stakeholders and strengthened the country's economy, and looked forward to following up on this matter. In conclusion, the Delegation reiterated its solidarity with the people of Ukraine and the support in rebuilding its IP infrastructure and IP ecosystem.

181. The Delegation of France aligned itself with the statements delivered by the European Union, by the CEBS Group, and the statement from Group B. The Delegation thanked the Director General for the presentation of the report, which the Delegation found very detailed on the consequences of the war. The Delegation also thanked the Secretariat team, which had prepared the report. The Delegation noted that technical assistance was a mechanism that WIPO made available to all Member States who requested it, but in the particular case under discussion, the Delegation would like to see the adoption of a decision to pursue the implementation by WIPO of technical assistance measures to help rebuild the innovation and creativity sectors and IP system in Ukraine. The Delegation stated that at that very moment, in the heart of Europe, the sovereignty and internationally recognized borders of Ukraine had been trampled all over by the Russian Federation through an unjustified invasion, in violation of UN General Assembly resolutions on the matter. Consequently, the Delegation observed that the support measures were essential and appropriate, since a big part of Ukraine's IP infrastructure had been destroyed. Furthermore, the Delegation, reiterated the clear relevance of putting in place support and technical assistance mechanisms to assist Ukraine.

182. The Delegation of the Philippines conveyed its support for the Chair's leadership and shared the commitment to a successful Assemblies that would benefit the parties. The Delegation believed that the report was timely in light of current circumstances in Ukraine. The Delegation believed that the current situation justified the continuation of the extended support and assistance to Ukraine as it had been first evaluated and approved at the 63rd Series of meetings of the Assemblies. The Delegation took note of the assessment report that revealed a significant impact of the conflict on Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem in Ukraine. The Delegation acknowledged the excellent work that had gone into the presentation of a factual report for the benefit of decision and policy making by Member States at these Assemblies. Considering the urgent circumstances, the Delegation believed that WIPO and its Member States should assume a critical role in mitigating the adverse impact of the conflict on creators, innovators and the IP sector in Ukraine, rebuilding the damaged innovative and creative ecosystem that benefited all stakeholders, and ensuring the survival of the IP ecosystem in Ukraine. Further, the Delegation believed that this role could and should be applied to other countries similarly impacted by conflict or natural disaster should there be a similar proposal submitted by a Member State. The Delegation supported, as it had done in the last Assemblies, the call for support and assistance to the Ukrainian innovation and creative ecosystem.

183. The Delegation of Canada associated itself with the statements made by the European Union, the CEBS Group and Group B. The Delegation stated that based on the comprehensive report developed by the International Bureau, WIPO Member States had been made aware of the fact that all sectors across Ukraine's innovative economy felt the impact of the Russian Federation's war of aggression: from film and music, to publishing and art, to research and innovation, to television and radio, and to the downstream supporting fields. The Delegation stated that the result was profound, and regretted the deplorable actions that led to such devastating effects. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for this important work. The Delegation fully recognized and appreciated the extensive support that WIPO offered to Ukraine in its time of need, and hoped that such support could continue. The Delegation expressed its unwavering support and solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and called on the Government of the Russian Federation to cease immediately its illegal and unjustifiable war against Ukraine.

184. The Delegation of Israel conveyed its ongoing concern about the Russian Federation's attack against Ukraine and associated itself with the comments made by the CEBS Group and Group B. The Delegation expressed its solidarity with the Ukrainian people and committed to continue providing humanitarian assistance. The Delegation reiterated its concern that the conflict in Ukraine was destroying the innovation and creativity sector. The Delegation expressed its support for WIPO's assistance in the restoration and development of the Ukrainian IP sector and ecosystem and for impact focus technical assistance, legal assistance, capacity building support and any other assistance in this regard. The Delegation urged the Secretariat to continue its support to Ukraine and provide concrete benefits to the creators, innovators and members of the IP community in order to strengthen the country's economy. The Delegation expressed its support to the decision tabled under this item.

185. The Delegation of Lithuania aligned itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and the CEBS Group. The Delegation condemned in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and demanded that the Russian Federation immediately ceased its military actions and unconditionally withdrew all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respected Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the report and the Director General for presenting it. Referring to the report, the Delegation stated that the war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine had caused a significant long lasting detrimental impact on the innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem in Ukraine with wide and multifaceted damage. It highlighted in particular the decrease of filings and brain drain at

the same time noting the resilience and adaptability of governmental institutions to operate. The Delegation welcomed WIPO's commitment to continue providing support and assistance with a focus on mitigating the adverse effects of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and rebuilding Ukraine's innovative and creative ecosystem. Since the Russian Federation continues its aggression against Ukraine, the Delegation expressed a need to address properly the immediate, medium and long-term impacts of the war of aggression on Ukraine's IP ecosystem. In this regard, the Delegation expressed confidence in WIPO's readiness to continue providing information to Member States on its ongoing activities as regards support and assistance to Ukraine's IP system following the relevant decision at the WIPO Assemblies adopted last year.

186. The Delegation of Norway joined colleagues who expressed support to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and supported the statement of the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and took note of the Secretariat's report in document A/64/8. The Delegation condemned the Russian Federation's attacks against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and stated that the Russian Federation's aggression was a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and also condemned Belarus for enabling and assisting the Russian Federation's aggression. The Delegation expressed its deep concern about the harm caused by the Russian Federation's attack on civilians as well as civilian infrastructure. It stated that the Russian Federation's attack on its neighbor Ukraine has devastating effects on the innovation and creativity sector and IP system. The Delegation stated that the people of Ukraine were paying a high price in economic terms and most of all in human suffering and loss and declared its solidarity with the people of Ukraine, expressed support to their legitimate and self-defense in the face of the Russian Federation's aggression. The Delegation stated that its support was about freedom and democracy, but also about defending the principles on which Europe's freedom and peace were based. The Delegation drew attention to respect for international law noting that a threat to that principle was a threat to all.

187. The Delegation of Poland, speaking in its national capacity, supported the statements made by the CEBS Group, Group B, the European Union and other delegations including Japan, Israel, France, United States of America, United Kingdom, and the Philippines. The Delegation stated that the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine adversely affected WIPO's work and the use of IP as an accelerator for the economic and social development of Ukraine that was evidently reflected in the Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the work on the report and, in order to complement the facts presented in the report, the Delegation shared Poland's perspective, stating that since February 24, 2022, almost 13 million refugees from Ukraine had crossed the Polish border. It noted that the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine had caused thousands of deaths and forced millions of civilians to flee their country in fear of their life and safety. The Delegation shared that from day one of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, Poland stood ready to assist refugees but also gave a helpful hand to Ukrainian entrepreneurs, students and innovators to withstand the drama caused by this war. The Delegation reported that, literally overnight, Poland was faced with a challenge to provide basic conditions for the Ukrainian entrepreneurs to continue their operations and since March 2022, Ukrainian citizens had set up over 25,000 new businesses in Poland, showing a fourfold increase to the pre-war time with the majority of the companies being SMEs, including creative and innovative businesses created by young Ukrainians. The Delegation also mentioned that the Diia Business Center established in Warsaw with support of the Polish Minister of Economic Development and Technology continued to support Ukrainian entrepreneurs forced to relocate their operations due to the war with most of its beneficiaries being the Ukrainian startups, scaleups and companies for tech, IT and creative sectors. The Delegation shared that the Poland's business harbor program additionally offered a comprehensive support package facilitating the relocation of businesses to Poland. It emphasized that Polish Universities, Research and Academic Institutions had opened their

doors to the students, researchers and scientists who were forced to flee their homes as a consequence of war. The Delegation noted that currently there were more than 21,000 Ukrainian students at the Polish universities, 60 per cent of them had been enrolled in autumn 2022 due to the impossibility of undertaking or continuing their education in Ukraine. The Delegation reported that Polish academic institutions also offered online programs for those Ukrainian students who had been unable to leave their country. The Delegation further stated that these were only a few examples illustrating the far-reaching consequences of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and addressing them would require significant resources, time and, most importantly peace and stability, that would restore the Ukrainians belief in a better future. The Delegation stated that for Poland, the question was not if but how the international community could support Ukraine in addressing the serious consequences of the Russian Federation's war. The Delegation strongly supported WIPO's commitment to continue its engagement and efforts aimed at rebuilding Ukraine's innovative and creative ecosystems and mitigating the consequences of the war. Poland would continue to engage in this international endeavor with a view to addressing the adverse effects of the war in the Ukrainian IP sector. The Delegation reiterated the need for continuing reporting on the matter during future WIPO Assemblies and, once again expressed solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and demanded the Russian Federation to immediately stop its unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine.

188. The Delegation of Vanuatu thanked the Secretariat under the leadership of the Director General for producing the Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creatively Sector and Intellectual Property System. The Delegation stated that the Report highlighted a number of issues, concerning the damage to the infrastructure and the national IP ecosystem of Ukraine. The Delegation stated that the IP ecosystem was the lifeblood of a country's economy, and reiterated that when the IP ecosystem of a Member State was being damaged, the Member State was entitled to receive technical assistance from WIPO to enable and assist in the reconstruction of its IP ecological system. It highlighted everyone's benefit from the environment that had the necessary infrastructure to promote creativity and innovation to flourish. The Delegation noted that Ukraine had invested a lot in its knowledge economy and had suffered losses and damage done to its national IP system and it welcomed the initiative taken by WIPO to assist in the reconstruction of Ukraine's IP system.

189. The Delegation of Liechtenstein thanked the Director General and his team for the presentation of the comprehensive report prepared by the International Bureau on assistance and support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system as requested by the decision of the Assemblies last year. The Delegation aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of Group B, and deeply deplored the negative impacts of the war in Ukraine on the country's infrastructure including its innovation and creativity sector; it further emphasized the need to minimize the negative consequences for the Ukrainian IP system, its society and economy, as outlined in the report. It urged the continuation of efforts by international organizations and states to support de-escalation of the current situation and to assist the reconstruction efforts in Ukraine. The Delegation also endorsed the continuation of the assistance and support provided to Ukraine by WIPO as introduced at the last Assemblies, and welcomed the support measures envisaged by the International Bureau.

190. The Delegation of Australia condemned the Russian Federation's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine, which had significantly damaged Ukraine's innovation and creative economy and IP sector, and welcomed WIPO's provision of technical and financial assistance to support Ukraine's IP system. The Delegation called on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory, consistent with the legally binding decision of the International Court of Justice of March 16, 2022.

191. The Delegation of Estonia aligned itself with the statements delivered by Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group, by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, and the Delegation

of Spain on behalf of the European Union. The Delegation noted with appreciation the report of the Secretariat on assistance and support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system mandated by last year's Assemblies. It stated that the need for continuous long-term support, including by WIPO, to help rebuild Ukraine's intellectual property system damaged by the war of aggression was evident. The Delegation expressed its full support for regular reporting on the implementation of the activities carried out by WIPO in support of Ukraine adding that Estonia would continue to condemn the Russian Federation's unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine standing with Ukraine and its people for as long as it would take.

192. The Delegation of New Zealand stated that it stood with the international community in condemning the Russian Federation's unjustified and illegal attack on Ukraine adding that the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine had very real implications for global peace, security and economic stability. The Delegation stated that the actions of the Russian Federation were a grave breach of international rules, the use of force to change borders and targeting civilians being strictly prohibited under international law. New Zealand stood in support of Ukrainian creators and innovators whose endeavors continued to be significantly impacted by the Russian Federation's aggression. The Delegation welcomed the International Bureau's continued support for the Ukrainian IP community.

193. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea expressed appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for preparing document A/64/8, as well as for the effort made by WIPO to implement the decision on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System contained in the document A/63/8. The Delegation stated that in order to fulfil the objective of WIPO as enshrined in article 3 of the Convention Establishing WIPO, to promote the protection of IP throughout the world through cooperation among states, it was crucial for WIPO and its Member States to develop a balanced and efficient international IP system that supported innovation and creativity. In this regard, the Delegation reiterated its commitment to closely cooperate with WIPO and its Member States, especially in enhancing the capacity of young individuals for rebuilding its IP ecosystem.

194. The Delegation of Slovakia thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for preparing the Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System. The Delegation associated its national position with the statements made on behalf of the CEBS Group and the European Union. The Delegation stated that the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine had detrimental effects on Ukrainian IP ecosystem and had caused unprecedented damage of Ukraine's IP infrastructure that was clearly reflected in the report. It underlined that the international support and assistance from WIPO was therefore more than needed and WIPO's continued cooperation with Ukraine was also necessary in order to recover from the effects of the unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. The Delegation condemned the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as the illegal annexation of Ukraine territories and expressed its solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainian people.

195. The Delegation of the Netherlands aligned itself with the statements made by Group B and the European Union. The Delegation sincerely thanked the Director General and the WIPO Secretariat for the follow up on last year's resolution to provide technical assistance to Ukraine, as reflected in the report provided. The Delegation acknowledged the membership for adopting this important resolution last year which allowed WIPO to assess how the war that the Russian Federation waged against Ukraine impacted Ukraine's IP ecosystem. The Delegation acknowledged the Ukrainian stakeholders for upholding the IP ecosystem in the way that they did in these more than adverse circumstances. It welcomed the findings in the report, notably where they confirmed that the most pressing need at this stage could indeed be at least partly countered by capacity building and technical assistance. This justified the decision taken by WIPO's membership last year and its Delegation therefore urged WIPO to continue the support. The Delegation agreed with the Director General's statement that peace is the only environment

conducive to innovation. Stating that as much as it welcomed the technical assistance that would be provided, no measure would be as beneficial to the restoration of the Ukrainian IP sector as an unconditional and immediate end to this unjustified and unprovoked aggression against the sovereign country. The Delegation declared that it stood with Ukraine.

196. The Delegation of Sweden thanked the Director General for presenting the report and aligned itself with the statement by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Unions and its member states as well as by Group B. The Delegation had heard clearly the devastating effects of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and how this affected innovation and the creative sector. It mentioned that one often said that necessity was the mother of innovation, however, the reality was that this very situation was not due to necessity but due to the fact that the Russian Federation, a member of the UN and WIPO, had launched an unprovoked and unjustified invasion against its neighboring country Ukraine. The Delegation stated that the report just presented described in plain terms the negative effects for both human capital, innovation and the IP system, but also the needs for rebuilding these important sectors. The Delegation believed that WIPO had an essential role in helping Ukraine rebuilding their innovation and IP ecosystems and expressed its support for WIPO's continued efforts to provide assistance and support to Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IPRs system.

197. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present comments to the questions that had been put forward by Group B.

198. Answering to the first part of questions on prioritization of the activities, the Secretariat stated that the prioritization was done in close cooperation with Ukraine, and that short-term, medium-term and long-term priorities had been identified, which were indicated on page 19 of the Report. The Secretariat also added that the MoU had been signed, which included all the relevant activities for the future. Regarding the security concerns, the Secretariat indicated that during the assessment and preparation of the Report, they had been able to mitigate this by using online delivery and a flexible and adaptable approach. It was also noted that the MoU had been developed on the basis of the urgent needs identified in Ukraine, and its provisions provided that the format and details of the activities would be coordinated between the parties, considering the restrictions associated with the legal regime of martial law in Ukraine. The Secretariat added that due to the very dynamic situation, the International Bureau would continue to adapt activities to the circumstances and emerging needs and take all necessary steps and provide continued support both directly from headquarters and through established partners in Ukraine in order to ensure implementation of the technical assistance in a timely manner and with the highest quality for the beneficiaries.

199. The Chair thanked the Secretariat and expressed hope that the information provided answered the questions that had been put forward and ensured that more detailed information could be provided later by the Secretariat.

200. The Delegation of Luxembourg fully supported the statements made by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union, by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, and by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. The Delegation pointed out that Luxembourg condemned the unjustified, unprovoked war by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which was a flagrant violation of international law and the very basis of this Organization as well. It reiterated its firm support and unwavering solidarity with the people and the state of Ukraine. The Delegation thanked the Director General for introducing the Report following the decision by the Assemblies last July, which contained an assessment of the impact of the war on the innovation and creativity sector in Ukraine. It was quite clear in reading the Report that the war had had a very significant impact on the innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem in Ukraine, as well as the unprecedented damage on infrastructure and losses for the creative industry and damaging impact on the mental health of students, young people, creators and many other people. The Delegation welcomed the activities underway and

proposed by the WIPO Secretariat to face this disastrous situation and its commitment to continue its close collaboration with Ukraine to try to restore and rebuild the Ukrainian IP infrastructure and ecosystem and expressed its wish for follow up in the response to the decision of July last year.

201. The Delegation of the Russian Federation pointed out that this initiative was a follow-up of the odious decision taken on item 19 of the agenda of the last year's session of the Assemblies. The Delegation recalled that this decision had been essentially a political declaration in terms of its content, which went beyond the mandate of the Organization and had been introduced in flagrant violation of the Rules of Procedure. The Delegation stated that, against that background, it was not surprising that Agenda Item 21 retained the politically biased and largely confrontational nature of the decision of the previous series of Assemblies. It also pointed out that the one-sided nature of the sources of information that had formed the basis for the conclusions contained in the document was noteworthy, specifying that according to the document, it was reported that about one hundred respondents had taken part in the survey, but all of them had been from Ukraine. Additionally, the Delegation noted that the statistics and data provided by them had not been verified, and the information cited with reference to international institutions, such as data on the number of civilian victims or refugees, did not always correspond to reality. The Delegation emphasized that the question of compliance with the WIPO mandate needed to be addressed in terms of social damage and consequences of mental health. The Delegation further noted that the statistics of the report on the destruction of the cultural and religious sites in Ukraine did not take into account the results of similar actions taken by the Ukrainian side. It was noted that in 2022 alone, 145 statues had been pulled down in that country, of which 28 were of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, several dozen were to Soviet soldiers who liberated Ukraine from fascism, not to mention other cultural and historical figures. The Delegation stated that the report also failed to contain any information on the prohibition in Ukraine of publishing and printing in the Russian language, which is a direct infringement of IPRs. It was highlighted that these bans were openly imposed based on ethnic and linguistic grounds and that is in obvious contradiction with the principle of the unacceptability of discrimination on ethnic and national origin and grounds. The Delegation stated that it was hardly surprising that the conclusions and judgements in the report went beyond the mandate of the Organization and recalled that WIPO does not have any authority in matters of defining conflicts or the status of territories involved in conflicts or in respect of international humanitarian law. The Delegation stated that it considers that speculation about the activity of IP specialists in territories which the National Association of Patent Examiners of Ukraine referred to as "temporarily occupied" to be absolutely unacceptable. The Delegation recalled that in the course of last year's session of the Assemblies and in the course of this year's session of the Assemblies, there had been statements in favor of expanding the range of beneficiaries of support to the innovative and creative sector and the IP system to other interested States in urgent need of assistance from the Organization due to the pandemic, turbulence in commercial markets and so on. The Delegation stated that, unfortunately, the voices of these countries had not been heard so far. In these conditions, the Delegation reaffirmed its belief that singling out a particular Member State for technical assistance, especially for purely political reasons, was unacceptable. It added that such an approach contradicted the principle of equality, which is at the foundation of international relations. The Delegation highlighted the failure to follow the Rules of Procedure of the Organization in considering projects that are related to the provision of technical assistance. It was emphasized that the carrying out of such projects required a clear understanding of the financing mechanisms and justification of the expenditure involved, as well as modalities and concrete steps to be taken to for providing that technical assistance. The Delegation stated that these questions fell within the competence of the PBC and the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP). However, this initiative had not been discussed in those relevant WIPO bodies. The Delegation considered it unacceptable and advocated for observing the existing procedure of the Organization for the approval of such projects. The Delegation stated that it had consistently opposed the artificial politicization of WIPO's work . It highlighted the

problems of the politically biased nature of the report and Agenda Item 21 as a whole. The Delegation further stated that, in general, this initiative had reflected the desire of a certain group of States to increase the level of politicization of discussions at the Assemblies by keeping controversial proposals on the agenda, which clearly did not receive universal support. The Delegation expressed concern that such actions diluted the mandate of the Organization and undermined its credibility as a specialized expert body within the UN system.

202. The Delegation of Belarus stated that it had considered the report of the Secretariat on the provision of support and assistance to the intellectual system and innovative and creative industries in Ukraine. The Delegation expressed their agreement with the assessment made regarding the politicized nature of the document and stated that it was impossible not to question its lack of balance, one-sided nature and the controversial information contained in the report. The Delegation pointed out that this was obviously a consequence of the fact that the very initiative to prepare such a report had not been in line with WIPO's mandate from the outset. The Delegation believed that this represented an artificial and deliberate politicization of the agenda of WIPO by the initiators of this issue, which it considered totally unacceptable. It was emphasized that the agenda and the activities of WIPO should remain inclusive and equally responsive to the interests of all Member States of the Organization. The Delegation expressed their concern that this initiative did the opposite and continued to apply unequal conditions to discriminate against other countries that also needed support and help from the Organization, and was therefore an abuse of WIPO's multilateral platform. The Delegation highlighted that in the current global cascading crisis, a number of countries, including those under illegal economic sanctions, were also in dire need of WIPO's assistance and support. The Delegation called upon the Member States of the Organization to return to a professional discussion of the practical tasks before WIPO and to cease abusing the Organization's platform to fulfil the political ambitions of individual Member States.

203. The Delegation of Nicaragua stated that it had taken note of the report and indicated that it had not accepted the decision contained in document A/64/8. The Delegation opposed the politicization contained therein, which hinders the relevant technical work of the Organization. The Delegation stated that the content of the report confirmed their concerns, as the report contained a number of provisions related to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political structure, indicating biased information and not reflecting the real situation. The Delegation underscored that WIPO was set up with a view to promote IP protection worldwide and of all its members, and that it was unacceptable to support one particular State, because there were significant number of members of the Organization, which required just as much financial and technical assistance. The Delegation believed that such approach breaks the spirit of the Organization, defined by Article 1 of the UN Charter, which refers to the sovereign equality of Member States. The Delegation stated that it did not accept the content of the report and it encouraged Member States not to politicize the technical work of the Organization and underscored that such an approach did not contribute to constructive decision-making but rather resulted in division and a lack of consensus within the Organization.

204. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking in their national capacity, supported the statements made by the Delegations of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Nicaragua. The Delegation rejected the artificial politicization of the work of WIPO to the detriment of its substantive work. The Delegation stated that technical assistance in the Organization should not focus on one State because many States required WIPO's assistance for many reasons, for instance States facing other crises such as natural disasters, effects of climate change, or States that were the victims of illegal unilateral coercive measures, like Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Delegation recalled that last year many delegations spoke of the need for technical assistance and it had not been taken into account that the conditions of technical assistance for all Member States should be subject to the standard procedures within WIPO, namely the CDIP and the PBC. With regard to the report, the Delegation stated it had taken note of it, but that the report also had a biased view of the conflict

because it only included information from one party in the conflict and undermined the work of this Assemblies and its effectiveness as a specialized agency.

205. The Delegation of Monaco supported the statement delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, associated itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group and the statement made by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive report that had been prepared with a very solid approach and considerable research with the authorities, Ukrainian users and international sources. The Delegation expressed its belief that any attempt to undermine its objectiveness is not fair and that the report was a fine example of the type of work that WIPO does. The Delegation stated that this is why a large majority of WIPO Member States had decided that there was a need to have an agenda item and a report on this matter. The Delegation stated that Ukraine is facing terrible and extraordinary circumstances and challenges and in this regard, the Delegation expressed its belief in the necessity of the report and stated that it would likely require additional reports on the matter to review WIPO's ongoing support to Ukraine. The Delegation stated that the work of WIPO on technical assistance was not undermined. It underscored the fine cooperation that Monaco has with WIPO, in particular since the recent signature of a cooperation agreement. The Delegation stated that any Member State of this Organization could request technical assistance, which WIPO would provide to the same degree of quality. The Delegation reiterated that this was an extraordinary situation, and that the same would be done for any other country facing such situation.

206. The Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that it attached considerable importance to IP and its contribution to development, particularly in developing countries facing tremendous economic crises, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the various challenges presented. The Delegation noted that many countries were facing unilateral coercive measures undermining their development and national efforts. The Delegation emphasized the importance of adopting a global and balanced approach in this regard, and highlighted the need for WIPO to provide assistance to developing countries and countries facing unilateral coercive measures. Technical assistance was crucial to help them build up their IP systems. The Delegation stated that support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector was the result of a decision adopted without consensus and it was not within WIPO's mandate. The Delegation noted the politicization of the report, which had been based on information from just one side or party of the conflict. The Delegation expressed its opinion that it should be up to the CDIP or the PBC to address this type of matter, and that preference should not be given to one country over others, as it would undermine the credibility of the Organization. The Delegation highlighted that many countries were facing crises and unilateral coercive measures and emphasized the importance of adhering to the principle of non-discrimination within the Organization, which is a non-political but technical agency in nature. The Delegation underscored the importance of providing technical assistance to all countries, without any form of discrimination and with complete transparency, and emphasized the need to avoid politicizing the work of the Organization.

207. The Delegation of Zimbabwe noted the report contained in document A/64/8 and recalled that at the 63rd Series of Assemblies in July 2022, Zimbabwe did not oppose assistance to distressed WIPO Member States. The Delegation stated that it continued to advocate for broadening support to a wider category of states beyond Ukraine, noting that challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, health-related epidemics, rising geopolitical and trade tensions, and increasing illegal unilateral coercive measures continually tested the very foundation of peace and stability, which is so essential for global IP ecosystems to thrive. The Delegation expressed deep concern about what they saw as the selective and arbitrary selection of one Member State ahead of others, which in their view, are equally as deserving of such support. The Delegation expressed firm opposition to any form of selectivity or discrimination in the treatment of WIPO Member States. It recalled with regret that this agenda

item was introduced at the expense of the long cherished tradition and convention in WIPO to reach decisions through consensus. The Delegation emphasized the importance for WIPO Members to consider whether they wish to build an inclusive and transparent IP system or a system that was designed to benefit a few countries. The Delegation expressed regret over the politicization of discussions within this specialized technical Organization, pointing out that there were other, more appropriate forums with the mandate to address highly sensitive political issues.

208. The Delegation of Germany aligned itself with the statements made by Group B and the European Union. The Delegation emphasized full solidarity with the people of Ukraine. It recalled an impressive exhibition on innovative Ukraine that had been hosted by WIPO during the 2019 Assemblies. This exhibition demonstrated the significant progress achieved by Ukraine before the Russian Federation's unprovoked war of aggression, as well as the positive prospects for the future of Ukraine's IP ecosystem that have since been destroyed. The Delegation noted that it was deeply affected by the damage done to Ukraine's innovation and creativity ecosystem described in the report prepared by the Secretariat. The Delegation thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of the report of excellent quality. It noted the report was of a merely technical nature and remained within the technical mandate of WIPO. The Delegation urged WIPO, as the technical international organization competent in IP, to continue and expand its technical cooperation with Ukraine and support Ukraine, referring to the statement of the Delegation of Monaco regarding the extraordinary circumstances because of the war of aggression against Ukraine.

209. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reiterated its position against the decision taken last year at the 63rd Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies as the basis of this report. The Delegation stated that the decision was politically motivated and biased against a single country, while constituting double standards. The Delegation maintained the position that WIPO's technical assistance should be equitable to all countries and regions affected by conflicts and natural calamities, and which should be performed on the basis of consensus among all Member States. The Delegation proposed once again to end all kinds of politicization at WIPO meetings in order to focus on discussing the important and basic issues in conformity with the mandate of WIPO.

210. The Delegation of China stated it had taken note of the Report in document A/64/8. The Delegation expressed its continuing stance for the respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty of all Member States and that the purpose of the principles of the UN Charter should always be abided by. It further noted that the legitimate security interests of all States should be given importance, and every effort conducive to peaceful solutions of crises deserves support. The Delegation stated that recently a number of countries had tabled peace initiatives to resolve the issue of Ukraine. The voice promoting dialogue and peace is getting stronger. The Delegation expressed its view that relevant parties should respond to the voice of reason from the international community and encourage parties to the conflict to remain calm and exercise restraint, as well as strengthen the contact and communication so as to accumulate momentum for the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. The Delegation referred to WIPO as the multilateral organization most influential within the area of IP and an important platform for all Member States to set up healthy ecosystems for global IP. The Delegation expressed its hope that the parties would focus the discussion on the professional and technical areas of WIPO and avoid the complication and politicization of the technical issues of WIPO, as this would not only serve the long-term health and development of WIPO, but also the common interests of all Member States. The Delegation stated that some Members had expressed the view that WIPO would provide support to all developing countries as well as those that have been under unilateral coercive measures. The Delegation highlighted that this issue deserved attention.

211. The Delegation of the Republic of Moldova aligned itself with the previous statements expressing support to Ukraine and of the request addressed to the International Bureau in

continuing its close cooperation with Ukraine to ensure assistance to creators, innovators and members of the IP community, to mitigate the adverse effects of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Delegation stated that it took the floor on this particular item as the Republic of Moldova became a direct eyewitness of how this war destroys lives, property and the spirit that could allow for innovation and creativity to thrive in Ukraine. The Delegation referred to over 800,000 Ukrainian refugees that had crossed the border of the Republic of Moldova since the beginning of the war. The Delegation stated that, with these figures in mind, the report's findings on the 33 per cent decrease in the number of patent applicants of Ukrainian origin, or that the IP use might be further affected following the exceptionally high uncertainty associated with the scale, duration and the intensity of the war, came as no surprise. The Delegation added that the assessment made with the respect to the impact of the war on Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem clearly indicated the relevance of discussing this topic within WIPO as a forum in particular, as well as the need to continue this assistance for the next year. The Delegation reiterated the demands of the UN General Assembly resolutions to the Russian Federation to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and immediately, completely, and unconditionally, withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

212. The Delegation of Cuba reiterated its position that politicization of the work of the Organization should not be allowed. The Delegation expressed its commitment to WIPO and its work and underscored that WIPO is a technical specialized agency. The Delegation shared and supported the right for all the developing countries to be given technical assistance on an inclusive, balanced basis, furthermore stating that countries that suffer from particular situations that affect their development because of unilateral measures taken against them should be also be granted that assistance.

213. The Delegation of Latvia aligned itself with the statements delivered by the European Union, the CEBS Group and Group B, as well as other distinguished delegations. The Delegation thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for preparing the comprehensive report on assistance and support for Ukraine, and Ukraine's innovative and creativity sector and IP system. The Delegation expressed its strong support of WIPO's commitment to actively provide assistance to Ukraine with the aim of rebuilding the Ukrainian innovation and creative ecosystem and to play its part in mitigating the consequences of the gruesome and unprovoked war raged by the Russian Federation. The Delegation stated its concern regarding the mixing together of completely different arguments and recalled that the topic of Item 21 was about support for Ukraine, resulting from the decision of the last Assemblies, without any discriminatory intent to any other Member State. The Delegation stated that the report shed light on the devastating impact of the Russian Federation's unjustified war against Ukraine on mental health, brain drain, financial and many aspects of the IP system in Ukraine, as well as on its people, economy and the government. The Delegation noted that Latvia's highest priority would always be to tirelessly continue to support and assist Ukraine in any way possible, including, when the time comes, the rebuilding of its innovation and creative sector. The Delegation stated that to rebuild, the war must be over and this was not close to a reality. The Delegation, in referring to the statements of other Delegations about WIPO's competencies, political statements and one-sided facts on which the report had been based, stated its opinion that it was shocking that on that topic there were debates, and such different perceptions of reality. In the Delegation's opinion, this could not distract from the fact that the Russian Federation was blatantly disregarding international law, calling into question its ability to be a responsible international player and trusted party to the agreements. The Delegation stated its concerns related to the Russian Federation's recent accession to the Geneva Act adding that as long as the Russian Federation continues to violate international law, it is not acceptable for WIPO to return to business as usual in cooperation with the Russia Federation. The Delegation called on the WIPO Secretariat to pay special attention to ensuring that in its everyday work, the Secretariat showed respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity and was not legitimizing violations of the UN Charter by one of its members. The Delegation further

acknowledged WIPO's assistance and support to Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector. The Delegation welcomed the International Bureau's commitment to continuing its close cooperation with Ukraine, to delivering concrete benefits to Ukraine, as well as its readiness to provide additional information, and requested the International Bureau to report on the implementation of these activities in future Assemblies. In conclusion, the Delegation invited all countries to step back from any suggestions of political statements and different perceptions of reality and facts, and to support WIPO's continuous assistance for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector.

214. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, took the floor to add some clarifications in response to some of the statements heard. The Delegation stated that Group B is supportive of technical assistance provided by WIPO to any interested WIPO Member State. It requested the Secretariat to confirm that so far the funds used for ongoing technical assistance to Ukraine had not generated any negative impact on the financing of other ongoing technical assistance and capacity building activities. The Delegation noted that according to the draft program of work and budget for 2024/2025, the overall development expenditure in the proposed budget had increased by 2.5 per cent and constituted 21.4 per cent of the total budget. The Delegation reiterated that technical assistance to Ukraine would not generate any negative impact on the development expenditure in the next biennium.

215. The Delegation of Mali took note of the report submitted by the Secretariat to the Assemblies under Agenda Item 21 on assistance to Ukraine. The Delegation stated that one of the essential goals of the Organization is to provide a balanced global IP ecosystem, to further creativity and innovation across the world. It stated with regret that certain fundamental principles that should guide every strategic decision taken by the Organization did not seem to have been taken into account. As an example, the Delegation recalled the principle of balance, which should ensure fair and equitable treatment for all Member States when it comes to technical assistance and cooperation. The Delegation stated that many countries around the world are currently facing multiple crises, having to spend a great deal on, *inter alia*, national defense and security, which is to the detriment of other strategic sectors such as innovation and creativity. The Delegation expressed its belief that it was unfair and not equitable to isolate one state in order to give it special support and assistance, as in the eyes of many that might seem to constitute preferential treatment and a precedent for the Organization.

216. The Delegation of the Czech Republic associated itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group, and the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and expressed gratitude for the support and assistance provided by WIPO to Ukraine in the past year, based on the relevant decision of the 63rd WIPO Assemblies. The Delegation thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for preparing the report on the assistance, which provides clear evidence of the level of devastation caused by the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Delegation found that the report provided an objective assessment of the situation of the country, which had been illegally invaded by another country, and failed to see what criteria for objectivity should be employed according to certain other delegations in cases such as this one. The Delegation stressed that the assistance provided to Ukraine or another country does not prevent any other country to request and benefit from assistance. The Delegation would have preferred to already be taking stock of the process of Ukraine's reconstruction after the war, instead, further damage from the Russian Federation's aggression, after more than 500 days, still continued. The Delegation stated that no matter how long it could take, these extraordinary circumstances could not be accepted as a new normal. The Delegation was of the view that WIPO Member States should renew the decision on assistance and support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system.

217. The Delegation of Portugal reaffirmed its full solidarity with Ukraine, as the victim of an illegal invasion, as stated by the Minister of Justice of Portugal in her opening statement at the

Assemblies, when she had indicated support for including Agenda Item 21 on the agenda, to consider the Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System. The Delegation welcomed the findings of the report prepared by the Secretariat, and expressed gratitude for the report, as well as its belief that it was vitally important that technical assistance would be provided as agreed.

218. The Chair asked the Secretariat to provide comments in response to the request for clarification put forward by Group B in relation to the development assistance.

219. The Secretariat confirmed that the assistance to Ukraine would have no impact whatsoever on other countries in any region and the Secretariat would continue to support and assist all Member States from all regions. The Secretariat noted that the decision referred to a special allocation, but confirmed that it was not going to be taken away from the budget of any other country.

220. The Chair mentioned that after listening to the introduction of the report by the Director General, and its presentation followed by the clarifications provided by the Secretariat, there were different views and positions expressed by the Member States in regard to the report. The Chair requested a break in order to consult with the Group Coordinators and delegations to identify a proposal for the following actions.

221. Upon returning to the plenary, the Chair announced the allocation of additional time for consultations among the groups, and adjourned debate on Agenda Item 21 until the following day.

222. Upon returning to the plenary the following day, the Chair recalled the consultations with all groups, following the presentation of the report by the Director General, the Deputy Director General, and Director of the TDC Division, as well as the debate in the room. The Chair noted that discussions were still ongoing and requested a break to hold further consultations with the groups that had outstanding questions and proposals for the agenda item, as well as to allow consultations among groups, with an aim of finding consensus.

223. After the consultations, the Chair resumed plenary by thanking all groups and Group Coordinators for their efforts, and presented the Chair's proposed decision text, as shared on the screen, based on discussions with the groups. The Chair believed that, although not embraced fully by all delegations, the proposed text would have the biggest potential to bring consensus and move the agenda item forward. The Chair asked if there were any suggestions, objections, or if the proposal could be supported by all. The text of the draft proposal was the following:

224. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it was concerned:

- took note of the "Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System" by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8;
- requests the International Bureau to continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, pursuant to the decision of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies (see document A/63/10, paragraph 312); and
- requests the International Bureau to provide an updated report at the 2024 WIPO Assemblies.

225. The Delegation of the Russian Federation expressed its gratitude to the Chair and the Secretariat for their efforts to reach consensus. The Delegation stated that unfortunately, it was

not in a position to support the draft decision as proposed by the Chair. The Delegation suggested amendments to the text, where bullets one and three remain unchanged and paragraph 2 would state “requests the International Bureau to continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, pursuant to the decision of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies (see document A/63/10, subparagraphs 1-6 of paragraph 312)”. The Delegation highlighted the addition of the reference to subparagraphs 1 to 6 of paragraph 312 and hoped that the amendment could be acceptable to everyone.

226. The Chair clarified that although the entire text of the proposal could be improved, adjusted and modified, the proposed text was based on the discussions held during the consultation process, and if amendments to the Chair’s proposed language were not supported, there would be no proposal from the Chair.

227. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking in its national capacity, expressed its gratitude for the efforts made in presenting the document and supported the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.

228. The Chair, without commenting on the merits of the proposal to amend her text, clarified that there would be no further drafting exercise on the Chair’s text, as she clearly stated to the delegations in the consultation process. The Chair stated that she considered the proposal of the Delegation of the Russian Federation as a new proposal. The Chair noted that she would offer the floor to other delegations before deciding if the entire proposal would be withdrawn.

229. The Delegation of Nicaragua supported the amendment presented by the Russian Federation.

230. The Delegation of Belarus supported the proposal by the Russian Federation.

231. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) expressed its gratitude for the efforts during the two days of discussions and deliberations on the issue. The Delegation also supported the proposal and amendments made by the Russian Federation.

232. The Delegation of Zimbabwe expressed appreciation for the report provided on the consultations and the efforts to reach consensus. The Delegation expressed gratitude to all Group Coordinators and groups involved in the discussions. It noted the proposal and welcomed efforts towards flexibility that could assist these Assemblies in reaching consensus. Finally, the Delegation supported the amendment by the Delegation of the Russian Federation.

233. The Delegation of Poland requested a short break for additional time for consultations on the proposed amendments with the CEBS Group.

234. The Chair, in the spirit of finding consensus, agreed to provide some additional time for consultations.

235. Following the consultations, the Chair invited the groups that requested the additional time for consultations to take the floor.

236. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B and the CEBS Group, stated its understanding that although the text tabled by the Chair was not subject to further drafting, this had not been respected by one delegation in the room. The Delegation stated that, on an exceptional basis, it was ready to engage on the new proposal by adding one additional word, namely to add “including” between paragraph 312 and subparagraphs one to six, as proposed.

237. The Delegation of the Russian Federation stated that it did not accept the proposal.

238. The Chair expressed her concerns that delegations were proposing amendments that were not in line with the discussion during the consultation process. As the Chair did not see a path for decision by consensus, she announced the withdrawal of the Chair's proposed text and opened the floor for delegations, requesting from them a clear path on the action forward.

239. The Delegation of Poland expressed its disappointment that there was no agreement on the language, which the Delegation thought was a constructive solution. The Delegation made a proposal for the decision text, on behalf of the CEBS Group, Group B and the European Union. The Delegation shared the text with the Secretariat, for Member States' consideration. The text of the draft proposal was the following:

240. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it was concerned:

- took note of the "Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System" by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8;
- requests the International Bureau to continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, pursuant to the decision of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies (see document A/63/10, paragraph 312);
- requests the International Bureau to provide an updated report at the 2024 WIPO Assemblies.

241. The Chair referred to the proposal now on the screen and opened the floor for any delegations wishing to speak regarding the text that had been put forward by the group of countries.

242. The Delegation of the Russian Federation retained the proposal it had made earlier, but since it had not been supported, the Delegation proposed a new draft decision that read as follows: "The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it is concerned, took note of the "Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System" by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8".

243. The Chair understood that there was a new proposal put forward by the Delegation of the Russian Federation. The Chair asked the Delegation of the Russian Federation to confirm that the proposal made by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of a group of countries, did not meet with consensus on the part of the Delegation of the Russian Federation.

244. The Delegation of the Russian Federation confirmed that it did not support that proposal, and recalled that a number of other delegations also did not support this text.

245. The Chair asked the delegations that had put forward proposals for clarification as to the specific action that they were requesting on the proposed texts.

246. The Delegation of Poland regretted that their proposal had not been met with a positive response, at least by one delegation, and asked for the decision of these Assemblies to be taken in the form of a vote upon the proposal submitted by the Delegation.

247. The Delegation of Ukraine seconded the motion put forward by the Delegation of Poland to call a vote on the proposal. The Delegation stated that the text of the proposal had been carefully crafted by many delegations and supported by almost all the groups in the room. The Delegation encouraged delegations to support this proposal and vote in favor.

248. The Chair stated that there were two proposals on the floor and according to the rules of procedure they should be examined in the order in which they were presented. The texts of the proposals, also showed on the screen, were as follows:

Proposal 1

The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it was concerned:

- took note of the “Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine’s Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System” by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8;
- requests the International Bureau to continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, pursuant to the decision of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies (see document A/63/10, paragraph 312);
- requests the International Bureau to provide an updated report at the 2024 WIPO Assemblies.

Proposal 2

The Assemblies of WIPO each as far as it is concerned, took note of the “Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine’s Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System” by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8.

249. The Chair asked the Delegation of the Russian Federation if it had any additional comments before proceeding with the vote, or any call for action, as its proposal did not meet consensus.

250. The Delegation of Russian Federation stated that it did not have any further proposal and any additional comments.

251. The Chair stated there was no consensus on the proposal by the Delegation of the Russian Federation and asked for confirmation that there was no call for action on its side for its proposal.

252. The Delegation of Russian Federation confirmed that the rules of procedure to be followed required them to proceed with a vote on Proposal 1.

253. The Chair asked the Secretariat to leave on the screen only the text of the proposal of the Delegation of Poland, as that was the text that would be put to a vote, as proposed by the Delegation Poland and seconded by the Delegation of Ukraine. The Chair asked the Legal Counsel to make the necessary announcements regarding the voting process.

254. The Legal Counsel stated that, as announced by the Chair, a vote had been requested. The Legal Counsel recalled that the Delegation of Poland had submitted, in accordance with Rule 21 of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure, the proposal shared on the screen, on which a vote was requested. The Legal Counsel noted that the proposal had been duly supported by the Delegation of Ukraine. Therefore, in accordance with Rule 25, the proposal would be put to a vote. The Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document A/64/INF/1 Rev, Paragraph 2, containing the list of Member States of the WIPO Conference. Delegations representing those Member States of the WIPO Conference were invited to vote. The Legal Counsel further recalled that according to Article 7(3)(c) and (e), subject to the provisions of Article 17 of the WIPO Convention, the WIPO Conference shall make its decision by a majority

of two-thirds of the votes cast and abstentions shall not be considered as votes. With regard to the necessary quorum, which is constituted by one-third of the States Members of the WIPO Conference, pursuant to Article 7(3)(b) of the WIPO Convention, the Legal Counsel stated that it had been informed that the necessary number of Member States were present. Finally, the Legal Counsel recalled that in accordance with Rule 29 of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure, after the Chair had announced the beginning of voting, no one shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of such voting.

255. The Chair announced the beginning of the voting according to Rule 29 of the General Rules of Procedures of WIPO. The Chair furthermore invited the Legal Counsel to guide the process.

256. The Legal Counsel informed that, in accordance with Rule 27 of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure, the vote would be conducted by roll-call. The Legal Counsel reminded delegations that, in order to proceed with the vote by roll-call, the roll-call would be called in the alphabetical order of the names in French of the States Members of the WIPO Conference. The Legal Counsel asked those delegations that wished to vote remotely to raise their hand on the online platform as soon as the first delegation was called, so it is known in advance that they would be connecting and voting remotely. The Legal Counsel requested the Chair to draw by lot the Delegation to be called first.

257. The Chair drew by lot Ghana as the Member State that would vote first.

258. The Legal Counsel thanked the Chair and restated for the delegations that the proposal submitted by Poland, on which the vote was being conducted, was as displayed on the screen. The Legal Counsel recalled that delegations would be called in alphabetical order and asked to state their vote. The Legal Counsel requested Member States supporting the proposal to vote 'yes', Member States not supporting the proposal, to respond 'no', and those Member States wishing to abstain from the vote, to respond 'abstain'. The Legal Counsel recalled that Rule 27(3) of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure prescribed that the vote of each delegation shall be recorded in the report of the session. The Legal Counsel announced the beginning of the voting.

259. The Result of the vote was as follows:

The Delegations – in the order of the voting, which followed the French alphabet and the names of the countries in French, beginning with the country that was drawn by lot – of Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, Norway, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Czech Republic, Romania, United Kingdom, Samoa, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Albania, Germany, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Spain, Estonia, United States of America, Finland, France, Gambia and Georgia voted “yes” (68). The Delegations – in the order of the voting, which followed the French alphabet and the names of the countries in French beginning with the country that was drawn by lot – of Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mali, Nicaragua, Syrian Arab Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe, Belarus, China, Cuba and Russian Federation voted “no” (11). The Delegations – in the order of the voting, which followed the French alphabet and the names of the countries in French, beginning with the country that was drawn by lot – of Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Pakistan, Qatar, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Algeria,

Saudi Arabia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Egypt, El Salvador and Ethiopia abstained from voting (27). The Delegations – in the order of the voting, which followed the French alphabet and the names of the countries in French, beginning with the country that was drawn by lot – of Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nauru, Niger, Niue, Oman, Uzbekistan, Papua New Guinea, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Dominican Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Holy See, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tajikistan, Chad, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Afghanistan, South Africa, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, United Arab Emirates, Eritrea, Eswatini, Fiji and Gabon were absent (86).

260. The Chair informed that all votes had been counted and invited the Legal Counsel to announce the results.

261. The Legal Counsel announced the result of the vote. She recalled that pursuant to Rule 27(3) of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure, the vote of each delegation would be recorded in the report of the session. The Legal Counsel informed that the number of Member States entitled to vote was 192. The number of Member States absent was 86. The number of abstentions was 27. The number of votes cast was 79. The number of votes constituting the required majority was 53. Finally, the Legal Counsel noted that of the votes cast, there were 68 “yes” votes, and 11 “no” votes, which meant that the proposal had been adopted.

262. The Chair announced the decision based on the results of the vote.

263. The Assemblies of WIPO, each as far as it was concerned:

- (i) took note of the “Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine’s Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System” by the International Bureau, as contained in document A/64/8;
- (ii) requests the International Bureau to continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, pursuant to the decision of the 2022 WIPO Assemblies (see document A/63/10, paragraph 312);
- (iii) requests the International Bureau to provide an updated report at the 2024 WIPO Assemblies.

264. The Chair asked if there were any delegations wishing to take the floor.

265. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) wished to put on record its explanation after the vote. The Delegation stated its belief that WIPO a, as a specialized agency of the UN, was a global forum for IP services, policy information and cooperation, with the mission to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP systems that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all. The Delegation welcomed the provision of technical assistance by WIPO to all countries and in this context, supported WIPO’s technical assistance to Ukraine. The Delegation further stated that, however, it would not support any attempt toward politicization of technical assistance by entering WIPO into issues that were beyond its mandate. The Delegation reiterated its principled position that WIPO was not an appropriate

platform or forum for raising issues of a political nature and that Member State actions should be in full and strict conformity with WIPO's mandate, principles and rules. The Delegation stated that it was committed to the long-standing precedent of consensus, which had been the actual wealth of the Organization. The Delegation hoped that WIPO would focus on its mandate and avoid intervening in any contentious issue that might put at risk its mission, affect the Organization's ability to fulfil its mandate, achieve its objectives, and undermine multilateralism.

266. The Delegation of Lithuania, on behalf of a number of Group B and CEBS Member States, stated its appreciation for the Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System contained in document A/64/8. The Delegation thanked the Director General for presenting the report and appreciated the role of the Director General and the Secretariat in supporting the discussions on the decision regarding Agenda Item 21. The Delegation emphasized that the decision of Member States ensured that WIPO would continue to provide concrete assistance and support as indicated in the conclusions of the report, focusing on mitigating the adverse effects of the ongoing war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and rebuilding the innovative and creative ecosystem in Ukraine, which in turn helped to rebuild Ukraine's economy. Further, the Delegation stated that the decision guaranteed that the Secretariat would report on activities to Member States at the next Assemblies in 2024. The Delegation referred to the Secretariat's previous confirmation that assistance to Ukraine in these extraordinary circumstances did not detract from WIPO's ability to provide technical assistance and capacity building to other countries who requested it.

267. The Delegation of the Russian Federation recalled that it had explained the problematic aspects of this agenda item in its previous statements. The Delegation believed this agenda item was politicized, fell outside the purview of the mandate of WIPO, and did not take into account the interest of other States who needed technical support and help from WIPO as much as, and perhaps more than, Ukraine. The Delegation stated that it had put in great efforts to try to build consensus on this question, despite its disagreement in principle with this item, and regretted that in this case it was unable to build that consensus. The Delegation stated that the vote had taken place with the support for the draft decision from only 68 states, which was less than a third of the total membership of WIPO, and clearly indicated that there was a lack of any united opinion on this particular question among the international community, as was the case last year when considering Agenda Item 19. The Delegation once again wished to draw the meeting's attention to this particular point.

268. The Chair thanked all delegations for their continuous effort and noted that this was a slightly disappointing situation, but at the same time not surprising, as there had been an attempt to find a consensus solution, even though consensus was not reached. Once again, the Chair extended her thanks to all delegations and interpreters and adjourned the meeting, declaring Agenda Item 21 closed.

ITEM 22 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR, INTERNAL OVERSIGHT DIVISION (IOD)

269. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document [WO/CC/82/6](#)).

ITEM 23 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORTS ON STAFF MATTERS

270. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document [WO/CC/82/6](#)).

ITEM 24 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

AMENDMENTS TO STAFF REGULATIONS AND RULES

271. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document [WO/CC/82/6](#)).

ITEM 25 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC)

272. See the report of the session of the WIPO Coordination Committee (document [WO/CC/82/6](#)).

ITEM 26 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

273. Discussions were based on document [A/64/13](#).

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

- (i) adopted the present Summary Report (document A/64/13); and
- (ii) requested the Secretariat to finalize the Extensive Reports, post them on the WIPO website and communicate them to Member States by August 11, 2023. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat by September 8, 2023, after which the final reports will be deemed adopted by September 22, 2023.

ITEM 27 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

CLOSING OF THE SESSIONS

275. The Delegation of the Russian Federation said that it was of particular importance for the decisions of Member States to be made primarily on the basis of the principle of consensus. It was regrettable to note that, for the second year running, that practice had been violated by the political ambitions of certain countries. The only issue that had clearly failed to find universal support among Member States was a selective approach to providing technical assistance. The Russian Federation continued to be of the view that the provision of technical assistance should not be artificially politicized. At the same time, Member States were able to reach a consensus on the majority of issues, which inspired hope that there would be future constructive multilateral dialogue among them. The Delegation commended the Secretariat for its efforts to find

consensus, and it hoped that WIPO would continue to fulfil its mandate in accordance with the letter and spirit of international law and would build its work on the principles of objectivity, transparency and inclusivity. The Russian Federation would adhere to the principle of consensus. Despite the aggressive and even discriminatory rhetoric and policies of certain countries, as well as flagrant attempts by some countries to disregard their international and legal obligations in the field of IP, the Russian Federation had complied, was complying and would, in good faith, continue to comply with the provisions of the international treaties to which it was a party. The Delegation called on all Member States to engage in constructive multilateral cooperation to further develop an effective and balanced global IP system for the benefit of all. The Delegation stood ready to continue to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with interested Member States and the WIPO Secretariat in order to work together to tackle pressing global issues in the field of IP.

276. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, thanked the Chair, Director General and entire Secretariat for their efforts to prepare and hold the WIPO General Assembly. It thanked the conference services, IT team and interpreters who had provided excellent working conditions for Members, and also thanked the regional coordinators in all Member States and other stakeholders for their work and cooperation. The Assemblies had proved that WIPO was able to assist Members in their efforts to grow, develop and respond to new challenges. In view of serious economic and geopolitical vulnerabilities, such as the post-pandemic recovery and the consequences of the war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the actions of WIPO had been relevant and valuable and should continue. The grave impact of that war on the IP infrastructure and innovation and creativity sector of Ukraine had been a source of concern for many CEBS Group members, who had been grateful for WIPO efforts to mitigate those negative consequences. In light of the continued Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, WIPO should continue to deliver timely and adequate assistance to the Ukrainian IP stakeholders affected. The WIPO General Assembly decision on the matter was welcome. The Group welcomed the approval of the Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/25 biennium, which was important to ensuring continuous WIPO engagement and the development of tailored programs aimed at supporting Member States in their efforts to expand IP ecosystems and foster innovation and creativity sectors. Work on normative issues should be expedited in advance of the Diplomatic Conferences to be held in 2024 in the hope of yielding concrete outcomes. The positive results of the Assemblies had been made possible by the flexibility of regional groups and delegations. The CEBS Group remained committed to helping WIPO to develop an efficient and effective IP ecosystem for the benefit of everyone.

277. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked the Director General for his leadership, and congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chairs for successfully steering the Assemblies. It thanked the Secretariat for its hard work and dedication, and the interpreters and technical staff for their professionalism and efficiency. It welcomed the adoption of the Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/25 biennium, and thanked Member States for their active participation and constructive contributions.

278. The Delegation of China wished to thank the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly, the officers of the various bodies and the Secretariat for their hard work. Under the strong leadership of the Chair and with the active participation of all parties, the Assemblies had efficiently completed their agenda. Fruitful results had been achieved on issues such as the Program and Budget, Audit and Oversight, and the election of the officers of the Unions. The Delegation appreciated the flexibility and constructive spirit shown by all parties during the consultations on the issues before the Assemblies. In particular, it welcomed the adoption by consensus of the WIPO Budget for 2024/25, and thanked the Secretariat, the Chair and the regional coordinators for their hard work in that regard. China had always believed that consensus was a fundamental principle that the Organization had always followed and adhered to, and one of the cornerstones of the Organization's smooth and effective operation over the

years. Members should cherish and adhere to that principle, and respond to the common challenges that they faced with mutual understanding, compromise, solidarity and cooperation, so as to promote the Organization's role in the development of the global cause of IP rights, and to make contributions to the well-being of humankind. Finally, the Delegation wished to thank the team of interpreters for the high quality of the services provided to the Assemblies.

279. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Chair for her commitment and guidance, as well as the Secretariat, conference staff, interpreters and technicians for making the Assemblies possible. It also thanked all Member States and regional coordinators for their efforts. Group B was pleased to see the financial performance of WIPO for 2022, which had underscored the crucial financial role of the global IP filing and registration systems of WIPO. However, registrations and filings were dependent on the global economy, which was currently fragile; WIPO should therefore continue to adopt prudent and effective measures to maintain its positive financial performance in the 2024/25 biennium. Group B was ready to engage constructively in preparing for the two Diplomatic Conferences planned for 2024, and thanked Germany for its contribution to the WIPO Voluntary Fund, which would facilitate the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Diplomatic Conference regarding the international instrument for generic resources and associated traditional knowledge. It welcomed the decision of the Assemblies to take note of the Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8) and requested that the International Bureau continued to provide concrete assistance and support to Ukraine, and an updated report on that issue at the 2024 Assemblies. Group B thanked the Chair for her efforts to arrive at a consensus decision, which would have been its preference. Group B reiterated its firm belief that consensus-based decisions are of utmost importance in WIPO and Group B members had shown their strong will to do so, which allows to move ahead with the normative agenda of WIPO.

280. The Delegation of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, congratulated the Chair, and thanked the Director General, senior management and Secretariat for their guidance and efforts to deliver the Assemblies. It also thanked the Diplomatic Engagement and Assemblies Affairs Division, the interpreters, conference services, technical team and everyone else who had contributed to facilitating work during the Assemblies. While the Group welcomed the decisions discussed, it was regrettable that one decision had needed to be decided by a vote. The principle of multilateralism and consensus-based decision-making were of great importance and had been the established way of working in the Organization. It was also of regret that it had not been possible to make a decision on expanding the membership of the WIPO Coordination Committee. Addressing the underrepresentation of the Group in the WIPO Coordination Committee on the basis of equitable geographical representation was highly important. It was positive that agreement had been reached on the financing and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the IGC, which was of great value. The Group reiterated its commitment to constructively engage with all Member States to advance the Organization's work in future sessions.

281. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Chair, the Secretariat and the Organization's partners, as well as the conference and interpretation teams for their efforts, which had facilitated discussion at the Assemblies. GRULAC reaffirmed its commitment to the multilateral system as a space for achieving consensus that make it possible, *inter alia*, to ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Diplomatic Conference on GRs, IP and associated TK, and was enormously grateful to Member States for their support. It also reiterated its belief in a balanced and inclusive IP system capable of promoting the development of all international communities involved. Education, research, heritage conservation and access for persons with disabilities were of the utmost importance and the Assemblies had proven that the IP system could contribute to those laudable aims.

282. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia thanked the Chair, the Director General, the Secretariat and all WIPO staff for the successful prosecution of the Assemblies' work. It also thanked the groups and delegations of Member States, the interpreters, the Assistant Director General, Andrew Staines and his team. The Delegation appreciated the opportunity it had been given to introduce his country through the exhibition it had held during the Assemblies and to celebrate Saudi Day together.

283. The Delegation of Samoa said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It applauded the leadership of the Chair and thanked the Director General for his support during the Assemblies. It reaffirmed its commitment and readiness to engage with all Member States to advance the work of WIPO.

284. The Delegation of Croatia thanked the Chair for her leadership, and the Secretariat, technical team and interpreters for their work. It also thanked all Group Coordinators and delegations for their constructive approach to discussions during the Assemblies. It was regrettable that the WIPO General Assembly had once again been held in July. The Delegation requested that the Assemblies be rescheduled to take place at their established time in October in view of the need to address the adverse effects of climate change; rising temperatures and the increasing frequency and severity of record-breaking heatwaves in Geneva posed significant risks. It was crucial to recognize the inherent challenges of scheduling the WIPO General Assembly in July when Geneva experienced its most severe conditions. Temperature extremes were not isolated incidents but a symptom of a rapidly changing climate. Returning the WIPO General Assembly to October would mitigate the risk and show Members' commitment to addressing climate change. It would also highlight the proactive approach of WIPO to sustainable decision-making, provide delegations with more time to prepare for substantive discussions and enable participation from a greater number of countries and organizations. Lastly, considering it unacceptable for a UN agency to have an external office in a Member State that violated basic UN principles, it called on Member States and WIPO staff to consider closing the WIPO external office in Moscow.

285. The Delegation of Jamaica said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC. It thanked the Chair for her leadership, as well as the Director General and the Diplomatic Engagement and Assemblies Affairs Division, the WIPO staff who had accommodated bilateral meetings for Jamaica and other GRULAC members, and the interpreters. Throughout the Assemblies, Members had been able to work to ensure that WIPO continued to deliver on its mandate of promoting a balanced and effective global IP ecosystem. The WIPO agenda would continue to be busy as Members worked towards the two Diplomatic Conferences to be held in 2024. The Delegation was pleased that Members had supported the proposal on the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at those events. It thanked the Member States that had contributed to the Voluntary Fund at the Assemblies and at the IGC meeting held in 2023. Jamaica would continue to support WIPO and its Members and leadership to ensure that IP enabled economic and social development.

286. The Closing Statement of the Director General is recorded as follows:

“Excellencies,

“Distinguished Delegates

“Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

“We have come to the end of this year's Assemblies, a journey that started many months ago and peaked with the work we have done in the past eight days.

“It has been an intense Assemblies, our largest ever with 1200 participants. The agenda has been full. These discussions have been serious, and, on occasion, our hours have stretched into the night.

“But through your skillful, diplomacy, patience, energy and collaboration, we have been able to achieve much:

“Updates and reports by committees and working groups have been made, and their work and mandates affirmed and reaffirmed with guidance. Officers were appointed to lead our governing bodies. And internal processes and procedures were refreshed.

“The Program of Work and Budget for 2024-25 has been approved.

“A lot of work was done, but the action was not always in this hall. We had many social events where Member States celebrated special occasions with us and took the opportunity to showcase their culture, creativity and heritage, bringing alive the world in the name of our organization.

“With the closure of the substantive decisions we needed to make, I wish to convey our deepest appreciation for the many positive statements made by delegations on the implementation of the MTSP and the impact it is delivering on the ground in all regions of the world, as well as in solving and addressing our common global challenges.

“We take inspiration from this as well as the work many of you are doing to transform your IP officers into innovation agencies.

“Dear Delegates,

“As I said in my opening address, multilateralism is the best means of ensuring that our interests are served, protected and advanced.

“And it is not just for the sake of multilateralism, but also because this work helps us to build a more inclusive IP ecosystem, which must take place on common ground.

“Our commitment both as a Secretariat and as international organization is that we will continue to support member states to find the space and the will to move forward together.

“Let me also put on record the Secretariat’s appreciation of the various stakeholders of WIPO.

“First, we thank Member States for the extensive engagement over many months. This started last year, when we asked you for feedback on the Program of Work and Budget; with the retreats and engagements we have had with Ambassadors and heads of IP officers; and the many bilateral and regional meetings at the expert levels in the lead-up, as well as doing these Assemblies.

“We also cannot forget the work of the Group Coordinators who have displayed the tools of their trade: dialogue, diplomacy and compromise, to advance positive outcomes on a wide range of issues.

“Beyond Member States, I am also very pleased that I took this opportunity during these Assemblies to have a WIPO-NGO dialogue, which was chaired earlier this week by Ambassador Muhammadou Kah of Gambia.

"I also have to mention our dear Ambassador Alfredo Suescum of Panama who has just chaired the WIPO Coordination Committee. Ambassador, we look forward to building a constructive relationship with you in the years to come, and to congratulate you once again on your election as a next Chair of the WIPO General Assembly.

"And of course, I have to recognize and appreciate on behalf of all of us, the strong leadership of our Chair, Ambassador Tatiana Molcean, who finishes her term as Chair at the conclusion of these Assemblies.

"Her energy and focus, as well, as her unwavering commitment to consensus, in difficult circumstances at times, is deeply appreciated not just by Member States, but also by the Secretariat.

"The role of Chair is very taxing, and I think I can be blunt by saying that no one quite understands it unless you have been through it.

"But I think the work you've done and the skill and the guidance you have given us for the last few years are a testament to what you're brought to the role. Thank you so much, Tatiana, for that work.

"Lastly, let me also take some time to recognize my colleagues here at WIPO, whose tireless work is essential to the smooth running of these Assemblies.

"Many chairs have told me that they strongly appreciate the work of the Secretariat, whose professionalism, flexibility and expertise they have come to rely on.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone on the podium over the last eight days as well as the wider Diplomatic Engagement and Assemblies Division and Office of Legal Counsel, not just for your work this week, but for your work in the weeks and months leading up to these Assemblies.

"My deep appreciation also goes to my many WIPO colleagues, upstairs in this building and elsewhere, who have, in the course of the last eight days, had extensive engagements with Members States. Many of you will have met them bilaterally, and I myself had close to 70 bilateral meetings.

"Also, special note needs to go out to the colleagues who work behind the scenes.

"Whether you have been involved in the preparation documents and agenda items or part of our interpretation, translation, audio visual, security, cleaning and catering teams, thank you for your contribution. You have really made the work of these Assemblies smooth and given a bit of that energy to us as we proceed with our work through the wee hours of the night sometimes.

"Lastly, as you prepare to depart Geneva, I hope you do so energized. Because we are ready to work with you to bring our collective vision of making IP an important catalyst for supporting innovators and creators anywhere in the world a reality.

"Thank you very much and have a safe journey home."

287. The closing remarks of the Chair is recorded as follows:

“Distinguished delegates,

“Allow me to address all of you for the last time in my capacity as Chair of the General Assemblies. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Chairperson and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the trust and support extended to me during these two years.

“It has been less than 2 weeks of very intense work and consultations. Not without challenges but I suppose nobody expected it to be easy.

“In this critical time, our work at the WIPO assembly holds immense significance. The challenges we have discussed represent only a fraction of the larger picture. Embracing multilateralism means valuing active dialogue, understanding each other, and taking meaningful steps towards collaboration, towards consensus.

“Despite all challenges I would like to express my gratitude to the delegations that have engaged during this time in a cooperative, efficient, and genuine dialogue. Thank you for your valuable contributions and commitment.

“I am immensely proud to have led historic discussions on the Diplomatic Conference on DLT and IGC and I very much appreciate the opportunity to have been part of it. Intellectual property serves as a catalyst for growth, for development. While in the middle of the UN 2030 Agenda we have been set back by the pandemic and by wars, we have to capitalize on innovation and IP in order to achieve progress and development.

“Thank you, Director General Darren Tang, DDGs, ADGs, Secretariat, particularly the team on the podium, Communication team and interpreters – you have been instrumental in guiding the Assembly’s work.

“I would also like to stress my appreciation to Group Coordinators.

“As we conclude this chapter our work does not end here. The challenges that lie ahead are complex and multifaceted in this ever-evolving global landscape. We must continue to strive for balance, ensuring that intellectual property rights are respected, and that multilateralism is preserved.”

288. The Sixty-Fourth Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of WIPO was closed by the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly.

[Annex follows]

ITEM 5 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. The Delegations and Representatives of the following 139 States, (including 13 on behalf of groups of States), seven intergovernmental organizations and 19 non-governmental organizations provided oral or written statements under this agenda item: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia (the), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao (People's Democratic Republic of), Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, European Union, African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO), League of Arab States (LAS), Patent Office of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC Patent Office), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), South Centre (CS), Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN), Intellectual Property Latin American School (ELAPI), International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI), International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC), Knowledge Ecology International (KEI), Latin American Audiovisual Authors Societies Federation (FESAAL), *Maloca Internationale*, Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (ORIGIN), All-China Patent Agents Association (ACPAA), China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), China Trademark Association (CTA), *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)*, Egyptian Council for Innovation and Creativity and Intellectual Property Protection (ECCIPP), Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA), German Association for the Protection of Industrial Property (GRUR), Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA), Korea Intellectual Property Association (KINPA), *Ordre suprême des ancêtres* (OSA) and Patent Protection Association of China (PPAC).

2. Delegations and Representatives commended the Director General and the Secretariat for their work over the previous year, including with regard to the preparation of documentation and arrangements for the Assemblies. Delegations speaking in their national capacity generally associated themselves with the statements made on behalf of their respective groups.

3. President Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi of Botswana:

“Director General, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO);

“Honourable Ministers;

“Excellencies;

“Distinguished delegates;

"Ladies and Gentlemen.

"Good morning.

"Chairperson,

"Allow me to start by congratulating you on your election and I wish you success in chairing this Assembly. I want to assure you and your bureau of Botswana's full support to ensure the successful conduct and conclusion of the Assemblies.

"I also thank Director General Taren for this kind invitation to me to address this important Assembly and congratulate him on his sterling stewardship of the WIPO Secretariat.

"In an increasingly knowledge-driven world, Intellectual Property (IP) has emerged as a catalyst for innovation, economic growth, and progress. While often viewed through the lens of developed nations, it is imperative that we recognise the significance of IP in the developing world, particularly in Africa. Our continent, with its vast potential and youthful population, stands poised to leverage intellectual property rights to foster sustainable development and achieve socio-economic advancement.

"Africa's rich cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and natural resources are reservoirs of immense creativity and innovation. However, without a robust IP framework in place, we risk losing the benefits that could be derived from these valuable assets. It is crucial that we safeguard and protect the intellectual property rights of our people, by ensuring that they receive fair recognition and reward for their innovations, creativity, and traditional knowledge.

"However, to fully unlock the potential of IP in Africa, we must address a number of challenges. Firstly, building institutional capacity, enhancing awareness, and providing technical assistance to developing nations are critical steps towards a more inclusive IP system. We must encourage collaborative partnerships between governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector to create an enabling environment that fosters innovation and creativity.

"Secondly, access to affordable medicines and technologies remains a pressing concern for Africa's development agenda. Therefore, balancing IP protection with the need for access to essential medicines and technologies is paramount. We must explore flexible mechanisms, such as compulsory licensing and technology transfer, to ensure that life-saving innovations reach those who need them most, without compromising the rights of innovators.

"Botswana recognises that, the new drivers of wealth in modern economies have evolved and that the paradigm of wealth creation has shifted from natural resources to an economy of ideas in which intellectual property has become one of the determinants of economic success.

"It is in this regard that intellectual property remains crucial for Botswana's economic growth. We continue to strengthen the IP system to provide incentive not just for local creativity and innovation but also for the socio-cultural development geared towards the economic empowerment of our people.

“Botswana has over the years made significant strides to improve its IP landscape. We have enacted intellectual property laws such as the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006 and the Industrial Property Act, 2010, both of which are currently under review. These reforms are aimed at strengthening IP protection and align our legislation to international IP conventions, treaties, protocols, and agreements providing IP protection standards.

“The Government of Botswana remains grateful to WIPO for the support it has received over time in the establishment and growth of Botswana’s Intellectual Property system. It is through such support that we are witnessing continued growth in the administration of intellectual property laws, and a growing increase in the awareness and uptake of IP by Botswana.

“I am delighted to announce that the Botswana Intellectual Property Policy (BIPP) was officially launched in November 2022, and we are certain that the implementation of the Policy will leapfrog our IP system and ensure that the entire IP governance framework contributes to fostering and harnessing the country’s IP potential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development.

“As I conclude Chairperson, allow me to reiterate the importance of intellectual property in the development of the developing world, particularly Africa. The Botswana delegation commits itself to working with other member states to ensure that these Assemblies reach decisions that will enable the Organisation to achieve its objectives, paving the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for Africa and the world.

“I thank you for your attention.”

4. The Delegation of China said that the Government of China was striving to advance the establishment of a strong IP ecosystem, strengthen the legal system for the protection of IP, improve IP management, strengthen full-chain IP protection, and optimize innovation and business in support of sustainable development. On World Intellectual Property Day 2023, President Xi Jinping had sent a letter in which he had acknowledged 50 years of cooperation between China and WIPO, emphasized China’s willingness to deepen its cooperation with WIPO and promote global IP governance in a more just and reasonable manner for the benefit of all, and reaffirmed the Government of China’s commitment to multilateralism and a greater degree of openness to the rest of the world. All countries should to continue to work together to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; WIPO should continue to play its role as a specialized agency and use IP to promote the implementation of the Agenda. The Government of China vowed to safeguard the smooth running of the multilateral IP system with WIPO at its core, calling on all to work in unity and solidarity, despite the complex and volatile international context, to address issues of common interest. The Delegation looked forward to the continued improvement of WIPO’s global intellectual property (IP) services, making them more flexible, safer and more suited to the needs of innovation actors globally. WIPO oversight and audit systems required improvement; the Organization should increase transparency with regard to program and budget implementation, to enable Member States to better understand and participate in its work. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China was committed to enhancing the IP regime and strengthening the legislative framework for the protection of IP. That policy supported the robust development of the innovation and technology sector and cultural and creative industries. On copyright, an amendment to the Copyright Ordinance in the Hong Kong SAR had been adopted on May 1, 2023, strengthening the protection of copyright in the digital environment. With regard to patents, the original grant patent system was being further developed and a team of

approximately 100 examiners was being set up to undertake comprehensive patent examination by 2030. Lastly, with regard to trademarks, the Government was working intensively to prepare for the implementation of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks. It would also leverage the Hong Kong SAR's edge in professional service talents, and act as a trading hub connecting enterprises from around the world and facilitating high-quality IP trading.

5. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that it welcomed the prudent approach taken by WIPO to financial policy and welcomed the achievements obtained by the Organization in 2022. WIPO was making a significant contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, technology transfers and capacity-building should be prioritized in order to foster innovation, promote research and development, and empower innovators, creators and entrepreneurs. The Secretariat's efforts to promote gender parity and increase geographical representation in the WIPO workforce should be intensified at all levels and across all sectors. In line with the principle of equitable geographical representation, Africa should be better represented on the WIPO Coordination Committee. Efforts by WIPO to facilitate regional meetings ahead of the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources were welcome. It was to be hoped that remaining gaps in that regard could be bridged at the forthcoming special session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), and that progress would be made in the course of the Assemblies on such critical issues as the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/2025 biennium and the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee and Program and Budget Committee (PBC).

6. The Delegation of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, said that in the post-pandemic context, there was a sense of optimism about the impact that WIPO could deliver. The Group congratulated WIPO on its continued solid financial performance, and commended efforts to deliver impact-driven programs and increase the budgetary allocation for development initiatives. The Group hoped that progress could be made at the Assemblies in all pending issues, notably the underrepresentation of Asia and the Pacific in various WIPO governing bodies. It did not make sense that, in 2023, there had not yet been collective progress towards achieving more equitable geographical representation in decision-making processes in the multilateral system. Together with the African Group, the Asia and the Pacific Group had submitted a proposal to expand membership of the WIPO Coordination Committee with the aim of ensuring a more balanced representation among all groups. The Group looked forward to discussing the proposal with interested parties. It was also hopeful that common ground could be found on the issue of financing for Indigenous People and local communities in the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. The Group urged Member States to finalize the terms for the evaluation of WIPO external offices in order to arrive at a decision on the opening of new offices.

7. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group, said that it was grateful to the Division for Transition and Developed Countries for its help in improving IP infrastructure and capacity-building. The CEBS Group looked forward to strengthening that cooperation. New industries, increasingly based on intangible assets, were the catalyst for growth and prosperity and created new opportunities for young people. Innovation and creativity, the driving force of the CEBS Group's economies, were essential to a healthy IP ecosystem, and WIPO had a key role in developing sound, sustainable and balanced IP ecosystems. The CEBS Group appreciated the activities envisaged under the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2022–2026 (MTSP), especially those aimed at supporting IP stakeholders. WIPO projects and initiatives engaging governments, regulators, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), academia, innovators and individuals were the best way to raise awareness of IP, and build capacities on the ground. Continuous support for creative

industries, new green and digital solutions, and IP commercialization and management should translate into economic growth. Improving IP infrastructure at the regional level should remain the focus of WIPO, alongside innovation and technology. The CEBS Group strongly supported WIPO efforts to raise awareness of IP among women and young people and promote their engagement in IP-related activities. It welcomed the report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine. The multidimensional negative impact on the Ukrainian IP ecosystem, caused by the war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation, showed that innovation and creativity could not exist without peace and stability. Addressing the damage caused would require long-term recovery efforts and the support of international organizations. It was hoped that WIPO would continue to support Ukrainian IP stakeholders to mitigate the consequences of the war, with the resulting geo-economic and geopolitical vulnerabilities and instabilities already causing serious consequences felt by WIPO and national IP ecosystems. The Group again called on the Russian Federation to immediately stop the unprovoked and unjustified war and respect international law. Moreover, the current session of the Assemblies should devote special attention to the pending normative agenda. The CEBS Group attached particular importance to the adoption of the Design Law Treaty (DLT), and was ready to work during the forthcoming special session of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT) to allow for the conclusion of work during the Diplomatic Conference to be held in 2024. It was also hoped that Member States would show flexibility in order to finalize the treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations; developing technologies must be taken into account, and the treaty must address the needs of broadcasting organizations and provide them with adequate and effective legal protection. The Group supported continued work based on the Chair's text of the draft treaty, which served as a good basis for future work. Regarding the IGC, the CEBS Group took note of the positions expressed at the four IGC sessions on TK and traditional cultural expressions. It welcomed the agreement reached on the proposed IGC mandate of work for the 2024/25 biennium. The Group was ready to engage in work during the IGC special session in September 2023 to make progress on the issue of genetic resources (GRs). The Organization's healthy financial position was welcome. WIPO Unions, especially the International Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), Madrid, Hague and Lisbon Unions, should continue to be strengthened.

8. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, said that it was grateful to the Secretariat for preparing such a thorough report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine. Technical assistance to Ukraine should continue during and after the war to rebuild the country's innovative, creative and technological capacities and economy. Group B stood in solidarity with Ukraine and expected regular updates from the International Bureau on the provision of such assistance. Turning to other matters, Group B welcomed the positive financial result and surplus recorded by WIPO for 2022. However, as the vast majority of the Organization's income originated from user fees for the PCT and Madrid Systems, and as those systems depended on a rather fragile and volatile global economy, prudence would be required to maintain that performance. Regarding the normative agenda, Group B stood ready to engage constructively in the preparation of the two Diplomatic Conferences scheduled for 2024 and hoped that they would prove to be open, transparent and inclusive. Noting that the IP legal framework was struggling to keep pace with the rapid and dynamic development of AI, Group B welcomed the decision of the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP) to discuss the issue of artificial intelligence (AI) inventorship and looked forward to making substantive contributions to those discussions. WIPO was to be commended for holding fruitful discussions on IP and frontier technology, which had attracted large audiences from diverse backgrounds. Group B welcomed the continuation of those discussions but wished to see their scope expanded to encompass tools for policy advice that were regularly updated.

9. The Delegation of Tajikistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC), said that the IP system was a constructive mechanism that made it possible to put innovative and scientific ideas and creative achievements into practice. The Group's member states were active users of the Organization's global services and parties to WIPO-administered, multilateral agreements. Over the previous 10 years, they had deposited some 35 instruments of accession to WIPO treaties. They were also developing IP infrastructure and working to enhance systems for the delivery of IP services. The Group would like to see a broader range of projects conducted in order to strengthen the region's capacity to meet the challenges facing it. It attached particular importance to the principle of geographical representation in the Organization – many were not represented at all in the Secretariat. It was important to promote multilingualism in WIPO, especially in the context of the extension of the language regime of the PCT, Madrid and Hague Systems of international registration, of which Russian should become a working language. Multilateral cooperation aimed at improving the effectiveness of the global IP system should be based on the principles of inclusiveness and openness, and on the collective involvement of all parties in developing balanced, consensual solutions. WIPO had an ambitious agenda. The Group believed that, in order to fulfill its specialized mandate, the Organization should remain a platform for constructive dialog. The Group expressed hope for further fruitful work and interaction.

10. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), said that it was in favor of a balanced IP system that effectively protected rights holders and ensured adequate access to knowledge, innovation, technology and culture to develop society as a whole. In that regard, GRULAC promoted the development of an IP system that boosted production and innovation in developing countries and created solutions to global social, environmental and economic issues affecting both the developing and developed world. It strongly supported initiatives and proposals that contributed to and facilitated education, research and the preservation of cultural heritage in developing countries, as well as the implementation of the Development Agenda (DA) recommendations and the achievement of the SDGs, all of which bore its hallmarks. It also advocated for an IP system that prioritized equity, diversity and inclusivity to make opportunities available to all members of society, particularly the most vulnerable. At the previous session of the PBC, GRULAC, with the support of the African Group, had presented a proposal to guarantee the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources, which would take place in 2024. GRULAC kept communication channels with other delegations open in order to reach a compromise and approve that important decision. It had been ten years since the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (Marrakesh Treaty), which remained very important. GRULAC had promoted and backed that Treaty and had been convinced of the positive impact of setting mandatory copyright limitations and exceptions for persons who were blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled.

11. The Delegation of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, expressed appreciation for the efforts made by WIPO to support IP and foster creativity and innovation globally and, in particular, in the Arab countries. Noting the progress made by WIPO in financial and operational terms under its results-based management approach, the Delegation also commended WIPO on positive developments with regard to its standards agenda. It said that the group was looking forward to achieving tangible results based on compromise at the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. WIPO played a key role in maximizing the benefits of IP and creating an environment conducive to innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, with a

particular focus on women, young people and SMEs. WIPO should adopt a strategic framework to improve accountability for and refine the assessment of its contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It should also underpin the effective implementation of the WIPO DA by gradually integrating the Agenda recommendations into the Organization's various programs and by prioritizing capacity-building projects that reflected the needs and priorities of Member States. Promotion of the use of Arabic in WIPO and the timely provision of publications, studies and information materials in that language for the benefit of the Arab public were important matters, as was the need for balanced geographical representation in the WIPO Secretariat, in line with the Organization's needs and the principle of equity.

12. The Delegation of Cabo Verde, speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), expressed the sincere gratitude of all nine member countries of the CPLP for the genuine interest evinced in the progress of the Portuguese language in WIPO. UN General Assembly resolution 77/14, adopted on November 21, 2022, had underlined the importance of the Portuguese language in international relations. It recognized the commitment of the CPLP to the promotion of the Portuguese language in international and regional fora, including the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies, funds and programs, and highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation between the CPLP and these entities. More than 278 million people spoke Portuguese in nine countries and four continents; that number was expected to reach 380 million by 2050. Portuguese was the fourth most spoken language in the world, the fifth language with the highest number of Internet users, and the most spoken language in the Southern hemisphere. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated May 5 as World Portuguese Language Day. Portuguese enjoyed special status within WIPO: at the September 1999 session of the WIPO General Assembly, it had been decided that Portuguese would become a working language in all WIPO training activities involving Portuguese-speaking countries, as stated in paragraph 102 of document WO/GA/24/12. Also noteworthy was the WIPO General Assembly decision of October 2000 allowing the use of Portuguese in WIPO fora. The revision of the Rules of Procedure proposed by the Secretariat under Item 9 of the Agenda was a welcome development. The signing of the cooperation agreement between WIPO and the Executive Secretary of the CPLP in April 2002 had made it possible to envisage the inclusion of Portuguese as an official working language of the WIPO. The CPLP remained committed to strengthening the special status of the Portuguese language, with the ultimate goal of its recognition as a full working language in WIPO, in line with the firm conviction of CPLP countries that multilingualism was a fundamental principle of the UN system and of WIPO itself. That principle underpinned the work of the organization, while recognizing the specific linguistic regimes and translation policies of each system. Accordingly, the CPLP called for a comprehensive and evidence-based discussion on the introduction of new languages in all WIPO systems incorporating clear methodologies and criteria, such as the number of expected users of a specific language based on current and projected users. The informal consultations on the possible expansion of the language regimes of the Madrid and Hague Systems, which the Secretariat was undertaking, were welcome; such technical consultations should be as thorough as possible and involve all aspects of use to ensure sensitivity to the widest number of stakeholders. Linguistic representativeness was a complete expression of social, political and economic inclusion, guaranteeing the legitimacy of any and all normative and decision-making processes.

13. The Delegation of Guatemala, speaking in its capacity as Secretary *pro tempore* of the Ministerial Forum for IP in Central American Countries and the Dominican Republic, said that the subregion was working on a daily basis to develop the economy and strengthen the sectors within it. Following up on the commitments made at the VII Ministerial Meeting of Central America and the Dominican Republic in March 2022, work was underway on three projects that would greatly benefit the subregion. The first involved creating a subregional plan for creative industries, the main objective of which was for each country to identify its creative sector with

the most potential and establish strategies and actions to promote its growth. The second targeted SMEs and sought to establish mechanisms and tools to help recognize and evaluate companies' IP in order to leverage it as a source of financing. The third involved preparing a strategic plan to enable interaction between IP system tools in order to promote and develop tourism and local gastronomy. Those projects had not been carried out in isolation. From the outset, WIPO had provided support and technical assistance through the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Copyright Development Division, the WIPO Academy and the IP for Business Division, all of which would help to complete tasks. The Delegation thanked WIPO and the Director General for their cooperation. The subregion currently faced many challenges but it would overcome them through joint efforts since its objectives included displaying the wealth of each country and its peoples' creativity and willingness to work hard. Preparations were underway for the VIII Ministerial Meeting, which would be held the following year in Guatemala. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its support and collaboration in preparing that meeting and the Director General, whose presence as on previous occasions would enhance it. The Delegation remained committed to promoting IP as essential to the well-being and sustainable development of its region.

14. The Delegation of Guinea-Bissau supported the statements made by the Delegations of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and of Cabo Verde on behalf of CPLP. Guinea-Bissau had closely followed recent developments in the normative agenda and cooperation activities of WIPO and hoped that those developments would benefit all WIPO Member States. In his opening speech at the 2022 WIPO Assemblies, the Director General had called for the transformation of IP into a powerful catalyst for jobs, investments, business growth and ultimately economic and social development. That would only happen if WIPO continued to support member countries that were still developing and that needed to raise awareness of industrial property rights through training on industrial designs, trademarks and patents, geographical indications and copyright. Guinea-Bissau was grateful for the technical assistance provided by WIPO and called for the implementation of the projects to establish a collective mark and/or geographical indication for cashew nuts, to enhance the commercial value of this main agricultural export product of Guinea-Bissau on the global market, and for the launching of the project to establish a collective mark for the "pano de pente" cloth of Guinea-Bissau which, to the people of Guinea-Bissau, represented collective memory and cultural heritage and should thus be protected and conserved. The protection of industrial designs, collective marks and geographical indications was urgent and indispensable owing to the scale of reproduction of Guinea-Bissau models and similar products in neighboring countries. The Delegation expressed its hope to benefit from the support of WIPO in the near future to implement that important project, since the products in question were the most strategic for the national economy.

15. The Delegation of Lao (People's Democratic Republic of), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that WIPO support for ASEAN and its regional initiatives had contributed to the completion of the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2016-2025, including the feasibility study on an ASEAN patent system and the harmonization of industrial design requirements. Such high-level studies and projects were key to ASEAN goals, which could not be achieved without the coordination and support of the WIPO Division for Asia and the Pacific and other divisions. As focus shifted to the ASEAN Economic Communities Blueprint 2025, ASEAN aimed to move towards stronger and more harmonized regional IP systems to facilitate free trade. It looked forward to working with WIPO on an intellectual property rights (IPRs) action plan for the post-2025 period, and would soon be updating the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be signed between WIPO and ASEAN at the 55th ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting in summer 2023. The MoU would provide for further cooperation in SME capacity-building and engagement in digital technology for business development, the financing of intangible assets and support for the creative industries of

ASEAN countries. ASEAN wished to invite the Director General to the meeting to sign the MoU between the two organizations. Lastly, ASEAN commended WIPO for its continued commitment to the use of IP as a tool for development.

16. The Delegation of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member states, said that it welcomed the WIPO Secretariat's report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine, based on the decision taken at the previous General Assemblies. The report provided objective evidence of the significant negative impact of the war waged by the Russian Federation on the IP ecosystem and innovative and creative sectors of Ukraine. WIPO must continue to engage in and support efforts to rebuild Ukrainian IP infrastructure and capacity. The war against Ukraine was unjustified, unprovoked and a gross violation of international law. It posed a significant obstacle to the work of WIPO and ran counter to everything that the Organization and its Member States collectively stood for. The European Union and its member states wished to reiterate their continuous support for and solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Turning to other matters, the European Union remained convinced that strong and balanced IP systems could and should contribute to the global economic recovery. It continued to support WIPO in reaching out to businesses in an effort to ensure a swift economic upturn. Drawing inspiration from the SDGs, it advocated placing a particular focus on the green and digital transitions, building on balanced and forward-looking IP ecosystems. The question of sustainability and continuing discussions on IP and AI remained high priorities for the European Union. The strategic approach to global innovation and creativity adopted by WIPO, supported by a balanced and effective system of IPRs, included proposals to reach out to and empower every member of society in an inclusive and undifferentiated manner. The concrete results of the Organization's horizontal and targeted measures and programs, for individuals and SMEs in particular, were encouraging. As regards the Organization's normative work, the European Union remained committed to reaching a conclusion on a meaningful broadcasting organizations treaty that took into account technological developments. Regarding patents, the SCP should serve as a forum for addressing the differences between existing patent law systems and discussing the future harmonization of substantive patent law. The European Union welcomed the progress in the work of the various committees and was grateful to the other delegations for their continued engagement, as well as for the consensus reached.

17. The Delegation of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the group of Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), said that the group's theme for 2023 was "BRICS and Africa, partnership for mutually accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism". The theme reflected a vision of BRICS providing global leadership in order to address global needs and concerns: economic growth, sustainable development and inclusion of the global South, particularly Africa, in reformed multilateral systems. BRICS member States were major users of WIPO global services and international registration systems, accounting each year for nearly half of all IP applications worldwide. They stood ready to contribute to the Organization's efforts to build a balanced and effective international IP ecosystem enabling innovation and creativity for the benefit of all. They also welcomed the commitment of WIPO to reducing the technology gap, enhancing geographical representation, promoting gender equality and multilingualism and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. BRICS member states attached great importance to constructive, multilateral dialog on IP issues, and regularly held expert meetings, training sessions for examiners, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities and sessions to exchange information on IP-related matters.

18. The Delegation of Afghanistan said that it appreciated the assistance that WIPO had provided over the past years, which had included building national IP infrastructure and setting up programs for SMEs. The Taliban's military takeover had prompted a brain drain and institutions were suffering from a shortage of educated and experienced staff. That shortage was exacerbated by the Taliban's ban on women receiving an education and working. WIPO should enhance its engagement with Afghan youth and women so that their crucial and creative

talent could drive social and economic growth. WIPO stood for innovation and sustainable progress. The Delegation was certain that, despite the Taliban's bans and with the help of technologies and innovative enterprises, the international community and the UN would be able to address the issue of education and capacity-building for youth and women in Afghanistan. The rich and deeply rooted culture of Afghanistan, as well as its traditional music and art, were at risk of disappearing. Innovative solutions, as well as help from exiled artists and musicians, were needed to preserve its cultural and folkloric heritage. The Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN Office would make every effort to sustain and promote achievements for the benefit of Afghanistan and the global community, in which Afghanistan continued to play an essential role. The Delegation looked forward to continuing its cooperation with WIPO.

19. The Delegation of Albania said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. The war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine had unquestionably had a negative impact on the geopolitical situation, global economic stability and efforts for a post-COVID-19 recovery. Long-term international assistance would be necessary for a full recovery and a return to normality. The war, combined with the destruction of institutional capacities and infrastructure, had significantly affected IP and access to knowledge, research and development in Ukraine. Albania condemned in the strongest possible terms the unprecedented and unprovoked attack against Ukraine, which grossly violated the UN Charter, international law and humanitarian and human rights law. The Delegation reiterated its support for Ukraine and solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In 2022, a law amending the existing law on copyright and related rights had been adopted, which aligned the country further with European Union law and regulated the functioning of collective management organizations (CMOs). To further align domestic legislation with its European equivalent, the Copyright Directorate had also planned a feasibility study and a study comparing existing national and European environmental legislation. In May 2023, the Ministry of Culture, through the Copyright Directorate, had organized a workshop with international experts on copyright in the digital environment. In the field of industrial property, the Government had undertaken legal reforms to move further towards European integration and modernize the existing legal framework; the reforms concerned the drafting and adoption of laws on trademarks, patents and utility models, industrial design, geographical indications and appellations of origin. The draft laws on patents and trademarks had been sent to WIPO, the European Patent Office (EPO) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) for comments, after which they would be published for public consultation. The Government had approved the National IP Strategy for the period 2022-2025, and a workshop on implementation had been held for stakeholders, with the cooperation and technical assistance of WIPO. A cooperation agreement between WIPO and the General Directorate of Industrial Property and Magistrate School would be signed to provide continuous training and cooperation for newly appointed magistrates in Albania. The country had continued to promote IPRs and the importance of IP to, *inter alia*, business, start-ups and universities. Numerous awareness-raising activities had been organized to mark World Intellectual Property Day, with a focus on reaching young people. The publication "IP and Tourism" had been translated into Albanian and promotional events to launch the publication had been held. The WIPO IP Diagnostics tool, which was available in Albanian, was set to be promoted through activities in Albania. The Intellectual Property Impact Certificate Course would be available in Albania in late 2023, and a training project for teachers was set to be implemented, in line with the recommendations of WIPO experts. Albania looked forward to strengthening cooperation with WIPO, focusing on increasing administrative capacities, staff training and technical assistance for the legal framework, and cooperation with the WIPO Academy.

20. The Delegation of Algeria said that the country recognized the key role that IP played in promoting creativity and innovation, transferring technology and advancing the socio-economic and cultural development of all countries, regardless of their level of development. As the world leader on IP issues, WIPO was called upon to further increase its impact by ensuring that its

policies and programs covered development and responded more effectively to the expectations of Member States. The Delegation welcomed the Organization's commitment to prioritizing the achievement of the SDGs and to helping Member States to meet today's pressing challenges. WIPO should further strengthen its programs for women, young people and SMEs and ensure the continuous improvement of its global databases and services for IP offices and Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs). The Delegation thanked WIPO and the WIPO Algeria Office for their support and assistance in implementing several key projects. The project to protect and commercialize Chechar honey and Babar carpets in Khenchela province was a good example of the way in which IP tools could add value to national heritage and TK.

21. The Delegation of Angola said that the Government had launched initiatives to diversify its economy and make the country a more attractive market for investors. It attached particular importance to raising awareness of the importance of IP and promoting a culture of protecting IPRs. Work had begun in 2022 on implementing the Industrial Property Automation System (IPAS) with the technical assistance of WIPO, with a view to modernizing IP services in line with international standards. In 2023, the Angola Industrial Property Institute began to digitalize processes in order to enable their migration to the IPAS tool. In 2023, WIPO had supported the holding of a seminar in Luanda on the PCT, an online seminar for judges from the CPLP and a WIPO Academy training program. Various Member States had also assisted in that regard. The training would not only help technical staff to improve their skills and better meet the expectations of users, but also to become spokespersons on the importance of IP as a driver of development. Angola welcomed its inclusion in the WIPO Graduation Support Package for least developed countries (LDCs) and work was being done to prepare the country for transition to the status of a middle-income country. In that regard, CPLP member States had signed an MoU and cooperation in 2022. The Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) had a key role to play in implementing the WIPO DA. Technical assistance, capacity building and technology transfer were all key issues for developing countries. It was to be hoped that the work of the IGC would stimulate consensus in that area and culminate in the adoption of an international legal instrument at the 2024 Diplomatic Conference.

22. The Delegation of Antigua and Barbuda said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC and thanked WIPO for its administrative and technical support, in particular assistance received from the Madrid Legal Division. Antigua and Barbuda was reviewing its Trade Marks Act, Copyright Act, Geographical Indications Act and the protection of new plant varieties bill. It also planned to revise domestic copyright law to strengthen the collective management system and institute regulations of use. The Delegation looked forward to the successful conclusion of an International Legal Instrument relating to intellectual property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. As a small island developing State, Antigua and Barbuda was exploring how creative industries could contribute to its gross domestic product. A public awareness-raising campaign on the benefits of IPRs for innovation and creativity had boosted knowledge of and heightened interest in IPRs. The Collective Trademark project, conducted in partnership with WIPO, was enhancing the country's apiary industry by protecting local honey producers and creating a more robust geographical indications system to bring tangible benefits for the whole industry. The support of the WIPO Department for Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications was particularly welcome. The Delegation of Antigua and Barbuda supported the proposal on the protection of country names and geographical names of national significance. The Antigua and Barbuda Intellectual Property and Commerce Office (ABIPCO) had organized an information open day, a primary and secondary school art competition, and a webinar on trademark examination training hosted by WIPO. Regional partnerships had been maintained, and the Government particularly welcomed horizontal cooperation on patent examination with the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office. Efforts were being made to ensure greater appreciation and

understanding of IP across all sectors. In that regard, cooperation was ongoing with the Ministry of Education, Sport and Creative Industries to develop the Antigua and Barbuda cultural information system, a portal to centralize and improve information sharing and exchange between cultural and creative actors, stakeholders and the general public. The system had been created in the context of the national cultural and creative industries mapping project, with the support of the UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity. The website of ABIPCO had been revamped to ensure up-to-date information and user-friendly applications and would be launched shortly. Access to online registrations was being improved and cloud-based services were being developed. The benefits of generative AI tools should be harnessed while ensuring public protection. To mark World Intellectual Property Day in 2023, the Office, a firm advocate of gender parity, had run an online campaign highlighting the innovative and creative spirit of the people of Antigua and Barbuda, including features on women's contributions in the area of IP. The recently released third edition of its video series, "Conversations on intellectual property", had featured interviews with eight women representing a variety of sectors. Activities had been organized for children, including a successful robotics and programming exercise. A partnership with the United States Embassy in Barbados had subsequently been established to organize a 2024 summer program for children. The Delegation thanked the WIPO Division for Latin America and the Caribbean for its continued support. Expansion of the Division's Section for Caribbean Countries would be beneficial.

23. The Delegation of Argentina said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC. Argentina was pleased to note the positive financial position of WIPO and the resilience of IP registrations to current economic conditions. It believed that the Organization should allocate its budget for the next biennium with due regard for the effective mainstreaming of the development dimension and alignment with the SDGs and the 45 recommendations of the DA, which legitimized the Organization's work and its status as a UN specialized agency. The year 2023 marked the 10th anniversary of the Marrakesh Treaty, in the negotiation of which Argentina had played a leading role. The Delegation of Argentina hoped that the two Diplomatic Conferences due to be held in 2024 would yield positive results. The Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources must be attended by its beneficiaries, namely indigenous peoples and local communities, if it was to be considered legitimate. Irrespective of the outcome of that conference, Argentina was convinced that the mandate of the IGC should continue to cover GRs and IP. As evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the IP system must be balanced, flexible and inclusive and facilitate not only the protection of rights, but also access to health and nutrition and the transfer and dissemination of knowledge and technology, in line with domestic policies to defend the public interest in sectors of vital national importance. The global challenges of the future called for global solutions. As the primary forum for discussing issues related to IPRs and innovation, WIPO had a key role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change, future pandemics and food crises, while striking a healthy balance between protecting rights and defending the public interest. The Delegation of Argentina attached particular importance to cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives implemented by WIPO, as well as to training activities for human resources in developing countries. It was grateful to the various WIPO divisions for their support, in particular the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Delegation of Argentina stated that its country had benefited enormously from cooperation, technical assistance and capacity-building activities: it was the host country for the WIPO Joint Master's Program in IP, which welcomed students from all Latin American and Caribbean countries; it had launched the third phase of WIPO GREEN, together with other members in the region; it had participated in the Latin American Network of Intellectual Property and Gender; it had brought the national TISC network to more than 30 research centers and universities; and its industrial property and copyright offices had participated in numerous workshops throughout 2022 and 2023. Through its cooperation with WIPO, Argentina had strengthened the main work

areas of the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI), in terms of transparency, regulatory adaptation, dissemination and awareness raising in the use of industrial property. That had enabled INPI to coordinate with other governmental agencies in promoting innovation in scientific and technological fields and in SMEs, while encouraging diversity and the inclusion of women in such initiatives. With respect to copyright and related rights, in November 2022, Argentina, in conjunction with WIPO, had hosted a sub-regional workshop on audiovisual content and the digital environment in Latin America. It encouraged the Director General to continue to work towards an inclusive and balanced innovation system that took into account the needs of developing countries. Gender and diversity, access to health and the use of IP by SMEs must be at the forefront of the Organization's priorities.

24. The Delegation of Australia said that it urged Member States to work constructively to achieve success at the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. Those processes were an opportunity to demonstrate that multilateral cooperation could produce tangible benefits and drive prosperity for creative people globally. Australia was committed to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples participated in decision-making directly affecting them. To that end, it had contributed A\$50,000 to the WIPO Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities with a view to supporting participation by representatives of Indigenous Peoples in the preparations for the Diplomatic Conference in 2024. In Australia, the number of applications for patents had reached a near record high in 2022. Patenting in healthcare had continued to grow, as had new IP for digital equipment, components and services. Research showed that innovative businesses that pursued patents benefited from higher wages and higher workforce retention. Australia would work with WIPO and other Member States to simplify the international IP system and make it more accessible to innovators, creators and businesses – especially SMEs. It was also exploring the possible impact of generative AI on IPRs and innovation. In that regard, it welcomed the WIPO Conversations on IP and Frontier Technologies. The Delegation of Australia supported efforts to modernize the PCT and the Madrid Protocol, and to negotiate a treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations. WIPO and the international IP system should continue to assist communities in their efforts to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reignite their economies. The Delegation of Australia condemned the illegal and immoral invasion by the Russian Federation of Ukraine and called on the former to withdraw its troops. WIPO and its Member States should consider all options for supporting the people of Ukraine and its innovation and IP system. Member States were encouraged to join the Marrakesh Treaty.

25. The Delegation of Austria said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. In particular, it endorsed the statements regarding the unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and welcomed the WIPO Secretariat's report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine, based on the decision taken at the previous Assemblies. Turning to finances, Austria noted the reports of the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC), the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) and the External Auditor and was pleased to learn of the robust financial health of WIPO. It was grateful to the PBC for its thorough work and stood ready to follow the recommendations as contained in its list of decisions. It particularly welcomed the recommendations on the Mechanism to Further Involve Member States in the Preparation and Follow-up of the Program of Work and Budget. The Delegation of Austria appreciated and fully supported the efforts made so far to prepare the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty. The conclusion of such a treaty would benefit designers around the world by simplifying and harmonizing design applications and registration procedures. With regard to the Madrid System, Austria was prepared to adopt the proposed amendments to the Rules of the Regulations under the Madrid

Protocol, as contained in document MM/A/57/1, and particularly welcomed the proposed minimum time limit – with a clear start and end date – for responding to a notification of provisional refusal. Those changes would no doubt help holders of international registrations to administer their rights. The Delegation of Austria noted with satisfaction the progress made in discussions within the SCP; the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS); and the IGC. It wished to thank the latter committee in particular for its continued hard work and supported its proposed mandate for the 2024/2025 biennium. Lastly, with regard to scheduling, the Delegation of Austria would prefer to hold the Assemblies in the autumn to avoid overlaps with the meetings of other Geneva-based international organizations.

26. The Delegation of Azerbaijan said that the country had embarked upon a process of radical reform that also applied to creative entrepreneurship, investment and competitive markets. The role of IP in supporting innovation should be understood as part of an interdisciplinary approach, given its relationship to the economy and the law. The country's national policy document reflected the mandate of the WIPO MTSP for the period 2020-2026. The Intellectual Property Agency in Azerbaijan was developing a one-stop-shop digital platform to facilitate access for patent and trademark applicants. It was also striving to streamline its services and reduce transaction costs.

27. The Delegation of Bangladesh said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. Bangladesh was continuously upgrading its IP system through legal and policy measures, and had acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty in 2022. With WIPO support, the country had launched IP-related projects aimed at women and entrepreneurs, and had established TISCs in the country. To promote fair, equitable and balanced IP regimes worldwide, in particular in LDCs, WIPO should pursue a development-oriented, demand-driven and transparent course of action in line with countries' needs and levels of development. With the global post-COVID-19 recovery still ongoing, WIPO needed to expand its role to support innovation and capacity-building, especially in developing countries and LDCs. The finalization of an international instrument on IP and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore, as well as a design law treaty, should also be prioritized. While appreciating the efforts of WIPO to promote the principle of equitable geographical distribution, the Delegation emphasized the need for an equitably distributed workforce across all geographical regions. Lastly, it expected WIPO to make serious efforts to implement the deliverables of the support package for graduating LDCs. To that end, the specific requirements of each graduating LDC and the support to be provided should be determined in consultation with the country in question,

28. The Delegation of Barbados said that the Government had implemented various initiatives to strengthen the country's IP legal framework, taken steps to further raise awareness of IP and extended its outreach activities. Work to build institutional capacity, upgrade the country's IPAS system and train officials was proceeding. Under a bill now before Parliament, the country's copyright law would be brought into line with the WIPO Internet Treaties. Recent accession by Barbados to the Marrakesh Treaty would necessitate further amendments to the copyright law, which would be tabled in a separate bill at a later date. Since accession to the Marrakesh Treaty, a partnership had been launched with the National United Society of the Blind to ensure that Barbados made the most of the ABC Global Book Service. A plan was being developed to establish a TISC at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies. WIPO had provided its guidance and assistance with regard to all those initiatives. WIPO had also helped with training, most recently on the examination of patents, for IP Office staff, local attorneys and agents. Barbados appreciated the work being done by the WIPO Standing Committees and IGC.

29. The Delegation of Belarus, commending WIPO for its efforts to build a multilateral dialog to share experiences and practices in the interests of innovative development in all countries, said that it appreciated the Organization's support in enhancing the country's IP system and

looked forward to further cooperation in the framework of joint initiatives. A WIPO project to introduce institutional IP policies at universities and research organizations had been implemented successfully in Belarus. Under a project jointly led by WIPO and the EPO, the network of TISCs was being developed and the innovation capacity of technology parks was being reinforced. The process for joining the Lisbon system was well advanced. Attempts to politicize IP were a source of concern. Illegal unilateral coercive measures undermined the efforts of WIPO and Member States to create an environment conducive to innovation, creativity, and economic, social and cultural development for the benefit of all. In response to the economic sanctions imposed on it by a group of States, Belarus had been obliged to adopt a number of legal measures to minimize the ensuing damage to its national interests. Those measures did not violate the country's international obligations. Now more than ever, it was important to maintain professional contacts and dialog and to bolster the export community for the benefit of all users of the global IP system. Member States should comply with the provisions of WIPO-administered international treaties and bilateral agreements in order to avoid any form of discrimination against users and to achieve an inclusive and balanced IP system.

30. The Delegation of Bhutan said that it was crucial to strike a balance between protecting IPRs and promoting wider access to knowledge and technology. Bhutan was working to integrate traditional knowledge (TK) systems with modern technologies to foster an environment where both tangible and intangible cultural heritages were respected, preserved and shared. The work of the IGC would supplement national initiatives to build a robust system to document and safeguard TK, and ensure that its rightful custodians received fair recognition and economic benefits. To boost the use of IP to enhance economic competitiveness and development, the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property had been created under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment. Through that Department, work was ongoing to embrace effective legal and institutional frameworks for a holistic approach to IP management. The Delegation appreciated the technical assistance and cooperation of WIPO. It looked forward to acceding to more international treaties as effective international cooperation was needed to address national challenges in the IP system. The Delegation confirmed that the Government of Bhutan remained committed to working with WIPO and its Member States to promote a fair, equitable and inclusive IP regime.

31. The Delegation of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC. Bolivia (Plurinational State of) was grateful for WIPO initiatives that built capacities, enhanced leadership, improved opportunities for women, young people and indigenous peoples and strengthened micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Likewise, it appreciated the Organization's efforts in the area of technical cooperation and assistance. WIPO must redouble its efforts in relation to the DA, which continued to be a priority for many countries. It was crucial to strengthen the Organization's social dimension and to develop a comprehensive and inclusive IP system that was useful, accessible, functional and equitable for all peoples. The world was in the midst of a systemic and multilayered capitalist crisis, and the challenges facing parts of the Global South were becoming increasingly complex. Action must be taken to counter the effects of a system that exacerbated inequality, increased concentration of wealth and posed an ever-greater threat to humanity and the planet. As Bolivia (Plurinational State of) had emphasized on multiple occasions, the protection afforded and innovation fostered by IP must promote not only the economic development but also the social and cultural advancement of all Member States, in harmony with Mother Nature, including the transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries, ensuring effective, fairer and more equitable access to health and education services. Bolivia (Plurinational State of) was committed to working towards the development of a multilateral, inclusive and participatory IP system that aimed to reduce inequality.

32. The Delegation of Brazil said that the Government of that country was continuing to invest in IP as an instrument to foster innovation and a tool to stimulate creativity, competitiveness and sustainable socio-economic development. The National Industrial Property Institute was making progress in reducing the backlog of patent applications and creating a new range of services for users. It was now focusing its efforts on implementing the strategic plan for the period 2023-2026. A highlight of cooperation with WIPO had been the registration of a collective trademark for an association of agro-extractive producers in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest. Their project had become a prime example of sustainable development. As had been the case with the Marrakesh Treaty, which had been adopted in 2013, a future Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources would have a human rights component. Member States had a collective mission to stand firm as they ushered in a new phase of global governance relating to IP and genetic heritage, which would promote principles of justice, inclusion and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

33. The Delegation of Brunei Darussalam said that it was grateful to WIPO for its close collaboration with the Brunei Intellectual Property Office in supporting innovation, and in particular for the visit by WIPO officials to the country in May 2023, during which fruitful discussions were held with various agencies and stakeholders. Those discussions had been instrumental in identifying areas where Brunei Darussalam could further stimulate innovation and improve its IP ecosystem. In that vein, the Government was currently preparing to accede to the Marrakesh Treaty. Moreover, Brunei Darussalam was taking steps to strengthen collaboration with local universities in establishing TISCs, underlining its unwavering commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation and providing comprehensive support and resources to academic institutions and researchers. The Government highly appreciated the invaluable capacity-building support provided by WIPO, which had significantly improved the ability of the Brunei Intellectual Property Office (BruIPO) to conduct efficient and robust trademark examinations. Recognizing the importance of the Global Innovation Index (GII) as a tool for assessing and benchmarking innovation performance, Brunei Darussalam was taking measures to improve its GII ranking through strategic collaboration with stakeholders, including WIPO, and implementing enabling policies. Such efforts reflected the Government's steadfast commitment to advancing IPRs and fostering an environment conducive to innovation and creativity.

34. The Delegation of Bulgaria said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member States and by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. It appeared that WIPO had achieved its main goals in supporting innovation and creativity through IP protection and the dissemination of knowledge for the good of all stakeholders. The Delegation was satisfied by the continuous development and improvement of the PCT and the Madrid and Hague Systems, which provided unique benefits for IP applicants and right holders worldwide. Bulgaria welcomed WIPO support for the development of key reports, such as the GII, and for platforms such as WIPO GREEN and WIPO Re:Search that were helping to address global changes and make progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Delegation highly valued bilateral relations between WIPO and the Patent Office of Bulgaria. It was grateful for WIPO's support for the implementation of projects focused on promoting IP initiatives to highlight the economic potential of IP for the benefit of national stakeholders, SMEs and universities, among others. The launch of the publication "Enterprising Ideas: A Guide to Intellectual Property for Startups" and the WIPO IP Diagnostics tool, both of which had been translated into Bulgarian and customized for the national context, would enable the country to continue to work towards a more inclusive IP ecosystem.

35. The Delegation of Burkina Faso said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. Despite the difficult security situation in Burkina Faso, the Government continued to recognize the importance of innovation and IP in

the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. Several initiatives had been undertaken with a view to creating an enabling ecosystem for the promotion of “Made in Burkina” products, produced and manufactured in Burkina Faso, through the strategic use of IP. In the context of promoting and strengthening the crafts sector, on June 2, 2023 the Government had issued a decree on the use of traditional cloth, such as *Faso Dan Fani* and *Koko Dunda*, which had been labelled in 2020 and 2022 under various socioprofessional categories. Regarding copyright, Burkina Faso’s legal and institutional framework had been strengthened. However, several challenges persisted and the Government had sought support from WIPO to implement several of the strategic actions in the national strategy for the development of IP, which had been drafted with help from WIPO, in particular the international protection of the protected geographical indication for *Saponé* hats, finding local solutions for the security and traceability of labels and implementing an identification provision, monitoring the use of digital platforms, as well as measuring the socio-economic impact of copyright in Burkina Faso and setting up a social security system for workers in the arts. The Delegation confirmed that the Government of Burkina Faso looked forward to welcoming the WIPO Director General to the December 2023 meeting of the Administrative Council of ARIPO, which it would be hosting.

36. The Delegation of Cabo Verde said that the country was committed to the strategic use of IP to develop tourism, the blue and green economy, transformation and the digital economy, the cultural and creative industries, and science, technology and innovation, as well as to accelerate the process of energy transition and efficiency. In 2022, WIPO, ARIPO and the EPO had supported the Government with the finalization of its Intellectual Property Policy Charter, the aim of which was to boost sustainable and inclusive development, accession to a series of international and regional treaties on copyright and related rights and industrial property and improvements in the related legal framework, and the strengthening of institutional capacity to manage and enforce IPRs. Recent initiatives designed to encourage the strategic use of IP included the launch of the country’s first appellations of origin for two wines, *Fogo* and *Chã das Caldeiras - Vinho do Fogo*; and projects relating to IP as a motor for businesses run by young people, the creation of a network of TISCs and technology transfer to African Universities (PATLIB network). The assistance of WIPO would be key to protecting more typical local agrifood products and handicrafts through geographical indications and appellations of origin, developing the Made in Cabo Verde brand, implementing the program for the dissemination of and training in IP and building the capacity of the Intellectual Property Management and Quality Institute to regulate the collective management of copyright and related rights.

37. The Delegation of Cambodia said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and by the Delegation of Lao (People’s Democratic Republic of) on behalf of ASEAN. Cambodia thanked the WIPO Director General for his participation at the 54th ASEAN Economic Ministers’ Meeting and his visit to Cambodia in September 2022. As a result, the cooperation between WIPO and ASEAN had been further strengthened, and the commitment of WIPO and Cambodia to promote IP development, especially the registration of geographical indications and collective marks, had been reaffirmed. WIPO assistance had allowed Cambodia to develop the necessary legal and regulatory framework for the effective management and development of IP; such support had enabled SMEs and grassroots communities to benefit from IP through GIs. Cambodia attached great importance to the development of a sound IP policy as a tool for economic development and poverty reduction. The Delegation requested continued assistance from WIPO and other development partners to support the branding of local products, strengthen and improve IP administration, foster innovation, and enforce IPRs while responding to the changing global IP environment.

38. The Delegation of Canada, acknowledging the Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine’s Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8) and noting the impact of the war in that country on its innovation and creativity ecosystem,

reiterated its condemnation of the illegal and unjustifiable invasion by the Russian Federation of Ukraine. Efforts by WIPO to build capacity through the WIPO Academy and to enhance IP services for users were commendable. The Delegation hoped that the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/2025 biennium would be approved. The Delegation looked forward to open, transparent and inclusive negotiations on a Design Law Treaty and an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. Member States should agree on how to ensure the meaningful participation of observers, particularly those representing Indigenous Peoples, accredited by the IGC. Canada had released its 2023–2028 action plan on the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provided a road map for further reconciliation, including with regard to IP. The Canadian Intellectual Property Office's (CIPO) recently released business strategy for the period 2023-2028 included a new fee structure designed to improve customer service, a modernized patent front- and back-office IT system and regulatory amendments to ensure alignment with the PCT.

39. The Delegation of Chile, aligning itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC, said that it highlighted and commended the Director General's work and leadership, as well as his commitment and dedication to guiding WIPO towards the creation of an effective, balanced and inclusive global IP ecosystem that was oriented towards developing all Member States and their multiple stakeholders. Chile aspired to strengthen a global IP system with those characteristics and it would work with WIPO and Member States to achieve it. IP was key to promoting innovation and creativity and, consequently, to ensuring productive development and creating solutions to global challenges. IP should also create opportunities for all members of society, particularly the most excluded. Chile valued WIPO work with regard to SMEs, gender equality and diversity and it appreciated the agreements that had been reached at the previous session of the PBC, which were of great importance. It supported initiatives and proposals that furthered the development and diversification of the production model in developing countries, as well as research, education, heritage preservation and the inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups. Chile also supported implementing the DA and progressively contributing to the achievement of the SDGs as IP played a role in solving global economic, environmental, health and social challenges. In that regard, Chile valued the services and projects that WIPO had provided and developed, which facilitated the use of IP and promoted innovation, creativity and competitiveness in developing countries. It also highlighted and commended the technical cooperation that WIPO had provided and which had enabled developing countries to promote innovation, creativity and cooperation through the creative industries, SMEs, entrepreneurs, women, diversity and Indigenous People. Over the previous year, the National Institute of Industrial Property (INAPI) had implemented a significant industrial property law modification relating to patents and trademarks, which included the incorporation of non-traditional marks, industrial designs, provisional patents and enforcement. In mid-2022, INAPI had applied the mechanisms to implement the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks, part of which had been developed with WIPO assistance and support. At the end of 2022, the Director General had visited Chile, which had provided an opportunity to agree on the implementation of projects, including some related to the WIPO COVID-19 Response Package, a project to assess the feasibility of designing an industrial property and business MBA, and a project to establish an industrial property academy within INAPI. All of those projects were underway to some extent, depending on their complexity. The Delegation appreciated WIPO assistance and support to carry out those activities, which were important to Chile.

40. The Delegation of Colombia said that the world was changing. The profoundly unequal effects of inhumane globalization, pandemics, war and climate change endangered the very existence of the human species. Achieving the SDGs over the coming two decades was no longer a goal but an undeniable necessity. It was essential to accelerate the energy transition

towards a sustainable development model that struck a balance between safeguarding biodiversity, ensuring decarbonization and finding a new way to protect life that provided hope for future generations. The inequalities that developing countries experienced, caused by a lack of progress in multilateral IP regulation, did not reflect that reality. Henceforth, our roadmap should be to safeguard biodiversity and nature as the only alternative to decarbonization, ensure health through the use natural resources, make good use of the TK of Indigenous Peoples, develop culture, and protect women's rights and access to knowledge as a fundamental human right rather than a commodity. The aim of proposals and decisions that strengthened and ensured a coherent balance between sustainable development and business, IP, investments and services should be to establish binding texts in the second half of 2023 that were incorporated into multilateral regulations to protect GRs and biodiversity. They should also ensure flexibility in copyright for greater access to education and technical progress, protect cultural expressions, and facilitate access to digital economies. Those had been the objectives of the development round but the negotiations had failed to achieve them. The new international paradigm and the growing risk of protectionism impeded its necessary implementation. Developing countries and Colombia, which shared the commitment of other nations, would ensure that they became a world power that ensured life and the energy transition. The new reality created a fundamental role for WIPO to lead in striking new balances and avoiding the bilateral traps that hindered humane internationalization, the development of a fairer and more balanced world, and the cooperation that helped achieve those noble objectives. It was no exaggeration to claim that the future of humanity depended on all of us, not just a few.

41. The Delegation of the Republic of Congo said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, which had recalled the importance of an IP framework for TK, GRs and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs). In November 2022, the Republic of Congo had hosted a regional conference on the protection and use of African medicinal inventions in Member States of the OAPI, which had clearly established that financial and geographical accessibility of good quality medicines for African populations was crucial for African States. To that end, traditional medicine and the traditional pharmacopoeia should not be forgotten when addressing health needs. The abundance of the traditional pharmacopoeia in Africa, and therefore among OAPI Member States, could have a significant scientific and economic impact. Putting it to use and making known its full value could result in the development of medicines that could treat the pathologies that undermined societies, thereby significantly reducing the financial resources spent by States in purchasing medicines from other countries.

42. The Delegation of Costa Rica said that the Assemblies provided an opportunity to evaluate what direction IP should take so that it continued to drive the development of innovation for all Member States. Costa Rica remained committed to the various WIPO initiatives undertaken in recent years and wished to reiterate its support for the work of the SCT to convene a diplomatic conference for the adoption of a design law treaty. It attached particular importance to discussions on the role of country marks in public policy and strategy and their impact on the socio-economic development of the countries in question. Likewise, it set great store by discussions on the protection of broadcasting organizations, the conclusion of a WIPO treaty on that subject through the deliberations of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR), and the issue of copyright in the digital environment and the development of technologies such as streaming.

43. The Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation confirmed its Government's commitment to continuing with the IP activities already undertaken over the course of the previous year, in particular to broaden and regulate the collection base for royalties from literary and artistic works, complete the reform of the Ivorian Copyright Office, and launch a bill on the music industry. The Delegation placed particular importance on innovation,

intended to give invention and innovation a prominent place in the structural transformation of the national economy. The Delegation appreciated the support provided by WIPO, in particular in the form of technical assistance and capacity-building.

44. The Delegation of Croatia said that the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continued, contrary to international law and causing incredible harm to Ukraine, including economically. The Delegation expressed its solidarity with Ukraine and called on the Russian Federation to stop its inexcusable aggression. It was grateful for the report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine, which showed the harm that the war had caused in those areas. Rebuilding and recovery would require significant resources, and the Delegation called on WIPO and other international organizations to continue to support Ukraine. In addition to its reservations about the purpose of the WIPO External Offices in light of technological developments in electronic communication, the Delegation considered the continuing operation of the WIPO External Office in Moscow to be improper. Croatia appreciated the good financial results of WIPO, and was confident that those results would continue with prudent management. The MTSP 2022-2026 would deliver a balanced, effective and forward-looking system of IP protection that incentivized the green and digital transition. It was positive that support for SMEs and their effective use of the IP system continued to be among the highest priorities of WIPO, as MSMEs accounted for the vast majority of enterprises in Croatia. The State Intellectual Property Office of Croatia (SIPO) continuously provided assistance to SMEs, including operational support for schemes on the protection and management of IPRs. Its recent membership of the Eurozone and Schengen Area would provide Croatia with further opportunities to internationalize the innovative activities of Croatian entrepreneurs and industry. With the support of WIPO, Croatia made continuous efforts to increase the efficiency of its innovation ecosystem and promoted awareness of the importance of the IP system, while providing support to all IP stakeholders. In cooperation with the WIPO Academy, the 9th WIPO Summer School on Intellectual Property in Croatia would be taking place in summer 2023, which would provide an enriching exchange of knowledge and ideas through its varied lectures and international attendees.

45. The Delegation of Cuba said that knowledge, science, technology and innovation were important to implementing national policies and the national socio-economic development plan 2030. Specifically, Cuba was facilitating the creation of science and technology parks, high-tech companies, SMEs, and science and technology companies where IP management was integral to development. The DA was a fundamental pillar of WIPO and its Member States. Integrating development into all WIPO activities, continuing discussions on IP and development, and making progress towards fully implementing the 45 agenda recommendations to achieve socio-economic development objectives presented a challenge to Member States. At the 64th session of the Assemblies, it was imperative to renew the mandate of the IGC for the 2024/2025 biennium, in recognition of the importance of its three pillars on TK, TCEs and GRs. Regarding the future work of the SCP, the Committee should continue to study limitations and exceptions, technology transfers and anticompetitive practices. It should also implement the DA recommendations that Member States had adopted. The Delegation highlighted support provided by WIPO, particularly the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean, in building national capacity. Specifically, it had provided support to create, manage and commercialize IP in the science and technology park of Havana as well as within the IT infrastructure sector. The Delegation also highlighted support with regard to the PCT and the Madrid System and it was particularly grateful to the WIPO Academy for teaching and promoting industrial property, particularly in terms of its impact on national activities.

46. The Delegation of Cyprus said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. It continued to condemn the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which was a violation of the UN Charter and international law. Cyprus believed that providing SMEs with support in the area of IPRs was vital in aiding the global economic

recovery and was grateful to WIPO for its efforts in that connection. It was taking a number of measures to strengthen IPRs protection. For instance, it was shortly due to establish the Cyprus Copyright Authority, which would have oversight of copyright issues. In addition, the IP office was developing a new back and front office system suitable for all modern IP needs. Cyprus continued to collaborate with international organizations and was taking steps to improve its cooperation with other organizations and national IP offices with a view to sharing IP knowledge.

47. The Delegation of the Czech Republic said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegations of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. It condemned the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine and welcomed the WIPO Secretariat report on assistance and support for Ukraine's innovation and creativity sector and IP system. Efficient and accessible IPRs systems were essential for enabling innovation and creativity, ensuring a legal framework for investment in and commercialization of intellectual creations, and regulating knowledge diffusion and technology transfer for economic and social growth. The amendments to the Common Regulations under the Lisbon Agreement and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications were welcome; the proposed deletion of Rule 5 (4) would simplify and streamline procedures and reduce the administrative burden for users. Given the increase in accessions to the Geneva Act, the planned budget increase for the Lisbon System was positive; financial support to the Lisbon Union should uphold the long-standing principles of financial solidarity between the various unions administered by WIPO and equality of treatment for each area of IP. The Delegation was committed to engaging in the preparations for the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. It was actively involved in the work of the SCCR, remaining committed to reaching consensus on a meaningful international treaty for protection of broadcasting organizations, and particularly welcoming the fact that the subject of the author's resale right had remained on the Standing Committee's agenda. The progress made by the SCP was welcome; a technical discussion on substantive patent law harmonization should be held. The activities of the CDIP were also important. The Delegation confirmed that the Czech Government remained committed to the work of the IGC and appreciated the renewal of the Committee's mandate. It supported the work of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE) and commended the growing engagement of Member States from all regions in that regard. AI was a priority area; the continuation of the debate on AI from an IP perspective was welcome. Sharing knowledge and information on the use of AI for IP examination procedures would be beneficial for all Member States. The activities of the WIPO Academy were appreciated, as were WIPO's IP policies for universities and public research institutions. Cooperation with WIPO on mediation had proven particularly helpful.

48. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said that WIPO had made significant progress in the previous year, such as improved technical subsidies for Member States and more accessions to WIPO agreements, while the WIPO Green Technology Book 2022 showed how science and technology could contribute to tackling climate change. The country hoped that WIPO would continue to focus on reducing the large existing gaps between developing and developed countries in the area of IP protection, with the expansion of cooperation in technology transfer, capacity-building and access to advanced science and technology in developing countries. Moreover, on the basis of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPO should give due consideration to the issues of morality and ethics in IP. With science and technology crucial to development, the Government had a core science and technology strategy to enhance national prosperity, with due attention for IP protection. The national IP Administration had recently been created, with a reorganization of the national IP structure. An IP-related exhibition had also been held to raise public awareness of IP and

ensure that its successes were translated into the development of the national economy. The Government would continue to cooperate with WIPO and its Member States to promote the development of science and technology and further streamline the national IP protection system.

49. The Delegation of Denmark said that Denmark condemned the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and that it stood by Ukraine and its people. Denmark would help its Ukrainian customers to safeguard their IPRs by considering requests for time extensions, reinstatements and restorations with maximum flexibility. Denmark welcomed the inclusion of item 21 in the agenda of the Assemblies and the detailed Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8). Continued cooperation between the International Bureau and Ukraine would be vital in efforts to rebuild that country's IP infrastructure. IPRs were key to reaping the fruits of innovation, which in turn was a major driver of economic growth, and to sharing knowledge and facilitating technology transfer. The IP framework had, for example, been instrumental in the historically fast development of vaccines to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. There was therefore a need to ensure that WIPO delivered cost-efficient, high-quality IP services that were fit for purpose. Denmark welcomed the Organization's efforts to improve the PCT, Madrid, Hague and other global IP systems and supported the development of IT services for users and offices. Smooth systems, simplification and cost savings for the benefit of the users were crucial to the continued and increased use of those global IP services. The Delegation of Denmark noted that two diplomatic conferences were scheduled to take place in 2024 on a design law treaty and an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. It urged the Secretariat to rethink the decision to hold the WIPO Assemblies in July, which created significant challenges owing to the plethora of other international meetings and obligations in the immediately preceding period and the fact that a number of Northern European WIPO Member States had their summer holidays in July.

50. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic said that the country's collaboration with WIPO had been essential to making groundbreaking progress in IP. In the previous year, the Dominican Republic had granted its first women's collective mark, and had digitized its entire distinctive signs procedure, which had made it possible to complete 220,000 registrations since 2020. Innovation was highly important to the Dominican Republic and its President, and its value would be expressed through actions, not just words. In June 2022, the national innovation policy of the Dominican Republic for the period to 2030 had been launched. It would be implemented on the basis of three fundamental pillars: human talent, effective governance and investment. The policy had been designed with reference to the international indicators of the GII published by WIPO. The country was therefore actively preparing for a coming global paradigm shift, and in that connection, it would develop its own national AI strategy, which would be published in August 2023. The strategy would make it possible to boost the use of AI in both the public and private sectors. It was also hoped to establish centers of excellence in research, development and innovation that would grant the country a unique position in leading the digital revolution at the regional level. The country aimed to have WIPO support to boost the implementation of both policies. It was committed to sharing with WIPO and interested Member States the process of creating both policies, as well as challenges and lessons arising from their implementation.

51. The Delegation of Ecuador said that the Director General should receive due recognition for managing WIPO in a way that had made it possible to promote the use of IP as a sustainable tool for development and increase its relevance. The challenges facing national IP offices at the global level and in relation to new technologies were significant. Members must question whether several years ago they would have been able to imagine that AI would be capable of performing surgery on a hernia, bringing back actors from the past to shoot films in the present, drafting a brief without a lawyer or decorating a room as if it existed in real life. The

answer would perhaps have been a resounding no. However, that had become a reality. Members would never have imagined that it would be possible to have a virtual life, buying expensive clothing from famous brands and wearing them in the market of the metaverse, acquiring and selling property without it existing in any tangible form in a real place or territory, or auctioning an unpublished work by a favorite painter through a non-fungible token (NFT). All of that, and much more, could now be done. The rapid technological advances that Members were experiencing had led to national IP offices taking on new challenges to manage their government portfolios, update their legal standards and update their systems. New challenges were appearing, such as adapting to the new 12th edition of the Nice Classification, the metaverse, the protection of trademarks in the virtual world, works stored as NFTs, and the observance of IPRs in an immaterial world. The Delegation thanked WIPO for its management and encouraged everyone to address the new challenge of technology and IP.

52. The Delegation of Egypt said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the regional groups to which it belonged. WIPO played a significant role in securing a balanced and effective international IP system. Support provided to Egypt for cooperation programs by WIPO, in particular the Division for Arab Countries, was appreciated. In September 2022, Egypt had launched its national IP strategy under the auspices of the country's President at an event attended by the Prime Minister and the Director General of WIPO. The launch underlined the importance attached by Egypt to the role of IP in achieving the objectives of its Vision 2030 plan. The aim of the strategy, among other things, was to develop institutions and the legal framework for IP, enhance economic returns and build community awareness of IP and its role. With the recent passing of the Act on the Establishment of the Egyptian Intellectual Property Authority, one sub-goal of the strategy had been met. Over the previous year, Egypt had hosted a number of events that reflected its interest in developing its IP system. The Director General of WIPO had conducted a successful visit to the country, meeting the President, Prime Minister, seven ministers and innovators, and attending a ceremony to launch the strategy. The Government had also worked to ensure that IP matters were included in the agenda of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change (COP27). In March 2023, Egypt and WIPO had co-hosted the first regional conference on current judicial trends in IP rights protection. The Delegation supported the Organization in its aim to strengthen the role of IP as a catalyst for innovation and creativity, indispensable pillars of inclusive development.

53. The Delegations of El Salvador said that it aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of the GRULAC and of Guatemala as the *pro tempore* Secretariat of the Subregional Forum of Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic. It shared the strategy of WIPO for bringing the benefits of IP to everyone. Much work had been done to make the processes and procedures of the national IP Office more flexible, and thereby modernize its infrastructure and improve its services. Significant progress had been made, making it possible to file electronic applications for, *inter alia*, trademarks, distinctive signs, patents and copyright. It had also automated the search service and strengthened TISCs to provide IP assistance to entrepreneurs, academia and MSMEs, among others. In El Salvador, 2022 had been a historic year for the IP Office, with a record number of applications to register trademarks and copyright, with increases in areas related to tourism and gastronomy. That achievement was thanks to the President's strategy for a security plan that had enabled El Salvador to move away from being one of the most violent countries in the world to being the safest country in Latin America, creating an investment and innovation ecosystem as a result of those successes. The country was working on improving its regulatory framework as a reflection of its commitment to protecting IP and boosting innovation. It was grateful for the continuous strategic support of WIPO on projects such as the National Intellectual Property Project and Strategy and the MoU on the IPAS in order to optimize those processes. Also of great value was the launch of the data systemization project. The Division for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Copyright Development Division had provided an

invaluable contribution to implementing those projects. The Delegation was grateful for the unconditional support that the WIPO Academy and its training institutions program had provided to the IP School of El Salvador.

54. The Delegation of Equatorial Guinea said that WIPO was increasingly becoming one of the world's most important entities in creating a better climate for dialogue and improved strategies for the development of Member States through a platform of ethical, technological and moral values that made human dignity possible, which was the common aim. For developing countries, the challenge was twofold: achieving the right launch for a global platform for development and prosperity, and maintaining their own sovereignty through the exchange of those values and the progress they entailed. They could pursue only the objective that would lead to a new culture, and that, through IP, would further the dignity of humankind and exchanges of groundbreaking technical knowledge that would allow the entire human family to aspire to full and intellectual enjoyment of it. No country could be left behind in that effort, as its common denominator was humanity and its societies. In recent times, there had been technological progress in AI. It was of concern that not everyone would be able to access AI at the same speed, which could widen the gap between users and non-users. To that end, the Delegation suggested that the various agreements and treaties be amended to reposition them for the new technological progress so that no one would be left behind. It was hoped that the Assembly sessions would shine a light on the presence of WIPO in countries that remained isolated by encouraging the implementation of those agreements and treaties in order to adapt them and align them with different local legislations in the service of IP.

55. The Delegation of Estonia said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. Estonia highly valued a strong, sustainable and balanced IP ecosystem that contributed to the recovery of the global economy. WIPO activities focused on SMEs and start-ups were crucial to promoting the smart use of IPRs among SMEs. It was positive to see the WIPO Global Awards ceremony take place during the Assemblies, and that innovation activities were becoming increasingly international. Estonia paid close attention to the GII every year, with a focus on digital innovation. The role of academia in nurturing innovation could not be underestimated. With the extensive support of WIPO, the first network of Technology Transfer Offices in the Baltic had been operating in Estonia since late 2022. The Delegation noted with appreciation the report of the Secretariat on the situation in Ukraine, and the assistance and support to that country that was mandated by the 2022 Assemblies. The need for long-term support, including from WIPO, to help to rebuild the Ukrainian IP system and repair the damage from the war was clear. The Delegation of Estonia condemned the unjustified and unprovoked war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and would continue to stand with Ukraine.

56. The Delegation of Eswatini said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. Eswatini appreciated the technical assistance it had received from WIPO in support of the review of its IP regulatory framework. The aim of the review was to develop and maintain a robust regulatory environment that would encourage local innovation and creativity. Overall, the quality of WIPO technical assistance had improved markedly. The Government would seek continued support for empirical studies in order to enhance evidence-based IP policy- and decision-making. Support for IP management infrastructure was critical, as shortcomings in that regard would undermine the entire IP ecosystem. Eswatini was well advanced in the process of acceding to a number of WIPO-administered and other international treaties, which would serve to streamline the national regulatory environment in line with international best practice. The partnership between WIPO and the ARIPO made it possible harness capacity-building synergies.

57. The Delegation of Ethiopia, aligning itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, said that WIPO was key to ensuring the effective

implementation of the global IP system and to supporting developing countries, particularly LDCs, in harnessing their resources and creating knowledge-based economies. Significant progress had been made in implementing the national growth and transformation plan, which had helped to develop a competitive IP system. Ethiopia Tamrit, a national economic movement, promoted innovation, technology transfers and a competitive manufacturing industry. However, delays persisted in other areas and efforts would be made to swiftly approve the national IP policy and revise laws that would facilitate accession to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks. Regarding the upcoming Diplomatic Conference, it was important to resolve outstanding issues and finalize the International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

58. The Delegation of Fiji said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. IPRs were essential for a knowledge-based society and for achieving the SDGs, especially in the case of Pacific Small Island Developing States. Those States needed more WIPO programs specifically tailored to their needs. The Government was developing a legal framework in order to protect the country's TK and TCEs and to prevent the loss and misuse of its cultural heritage. It welcomed the decision to convene the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an international Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources in 2024 and urged Member States to show flexibility and a readiness to compromise in order to achieve a positive outcome. The President of Fiji had recently declared the country's endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Respecting and protecting the TK and TCEs of Indigenous Peoples was essential for preserving their cultural diversity and vitality. WIPO played a crucial role in safeguarding their resources by strengthening IP protection, including through the use of geographical indications.

59. The Delegation of Finland said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. Generative AI had become more widely available as of late and was simplifying content creation for any purpose. Indeed, it could yet prove to be as important an invention as the telephone or the internet. The Delegation believed that the efficient management of the IP framework was crucial for future generations of inventors and creators and for society as a whole and welcomed the ongoing work of WIPO in relation to AI. The IP strategy of Finland for 2020–2030 contained 15 measures to improve the operating environment for IPRs in the country, including actions aimed at improving skills in IP and related areas. The measures extended to strengthening IP governance in political decision-making, supporting the commercialization of IP and developing the national IPRs system, including patent legislation. Developing copyright infrastructure was a high priority for Finland. Recognizing the need to harness fast-evolving technologies in the copyright system to promote the interoperability of IP-related data across public and private platforms, in 2023, Finland – along with Estonia and Latvia – would apply to the European Commission to establish a European digital infrastructure consortium for the development of copyright infrastructure. Finland had worked intensively to develop skills in IPRs for indigenous peoples regionally. In March 2023, the Sámi Parliament and the Finnish Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, together with the European Parliament, had organized the Summit of Barents Euro-Arctic Indigenous Sámi People, at which participants had recognized the significance of the Sámi as the only indigenous people in the European Union. Finland had developed training material to promote the use of the IP system by the Sámi people, with due regard for their needs and perspectives. Any new systems for the protection of sui generis rights must dovetail with the existing IP system. Lastly, while Finland continued to contribute to preparations for the upcoming Diplomatic Conferences, it wished to emphasize that WIPO should continue to be a Member-State-driven and consensus-based organization. Indeed, multilateralism was the best

way to achieve sustainable results. The Organization and the Member States must cooperate to ensure that SMEs, creators, innovators, young people and policy makers in both developed and developing countries could address IP issues in a positive manner.

60. The Delegation of France said that it considered IP to be a driver for innovation both for developing and developed countries. France took a balanced approach, aligning the requirement to protect inventors with the importance of rapid and affordable distribution of innovation, for example in areas such as health and climate change. The aim of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris had been to launch a new financial commitment to respond to the huge challenge of reducing global greenhouse gas emissions, while stepping up the fight against poverty and for human development. In that regard, France welcomed the progress made in high-level inter-institutional cooperation, which was crucial for drafting a new international treaty on pandemic preparedness, a project that was essential for North-South cooperation and for the world. Technological innovation, which would generate economies of scale and facilitate growth of the green economy and the entertainment economy, should be regulated to protect the rights of creators and developers. The Delegation would do its utmost to facilitate the normative work of WIPO and was preparing, in the context of the European Union, for the forthcoming diplomatic conferences on genetic resources and protection of designs. A balanced draft broadcasting organizations treaty should be concluded. Equality between unions administered by WIPO was particularly important. In that regard, the Delegation supported the allocation of additional financial resources to the Lisbon system. It was impossible to ignore the war on Europe's threshold. Any war of aggression should be condemned and the multilateral system must respond in line with the UN Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. Lastly, the commitment of the Director General and staff of WIPO to work for the betterment of humanity was appreciated.

61. The Delegation of the Gambia said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The Gambia had carried out a number of activities over the previous year to promote IPRs. The country's IP policy and strategy for the period 2018-2023 was ongoing and would be reviewed in the first quarter of 2024. It was expected that a law on IP would be enacted by the end of 2023. A single IP office would be established thereunder with a view to streamlining the administration of IPRs. On the occasion of a workshop on patent, trademark and design search tools, held in April in partnership with WIPO and the University of The Gambia, the University had launched its institutional IP policy and its TISC. Those developments would help to foster innovation among, and generate jobs for, young people, who were affected by high rates of unemployment. Further support to develop the Center would be welcome. In 2023, representatives from the Gambia had attended a regional training workshop on IPAS 4.0 in Zimbabwe, which had been organized by WIPO in partnership with the ARIPO. The Government aimed to see the IPAS system launched in the country by the end of 2023 and would ratify all the major WIPO copyright and related rights treaties shortly. It was grateful for the support provided by WIPO to its creative industries and welcomed the ongoing collaboration between WIPO and ARIPO, from which it had benefited greatly.

62. The Delegation of Georgia said that IP, in all its forms, was key to addressing the challenges facing the modern world. For all people to benefit from IP and contribute to global development, there was a need for more widespread and more comprehensive awareness-raising campaigns on IP. Georgia was undertaking a campaign to introduce IP teaching to schools, and over 100 teachers from 28 schools had been trained so far. However, as the volume of IP increased, it would become increasingly essential to create and continuously update mechanisms to protect against counterfeiting. Real results could only be achieved through joint work, and WIPO provided an ideal platform for effective cooperation. Two noteworthy joint events had been the International Conference on the Role of IP Offices in the National Innovation Ecosystem, organized by WIPO and the Intellectual Property Center of Georgia (IPCG), during which the WIPO Director General had visited Georgia, and the

Worldwide Symposium on GIs. Other joint projects had included WIPO support for the IPCG training center, the development and introduction of a joint master's degree program, the implementation of IP training courses for the private sector and the judicial system, and a joint project on the branding and commercialization of geographical indications. Lastly, it was important to recall that all countries had an equal share in the responsibilities, results and challenges of WIPO.

63. The Delegation of Germany said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. Germany fully supported the people of Ukraine and urged WIPO to expand its technical cooperation with that country. IP was an important tool for crisis recovery and for meeting global challenges, including with regard to health, climate change and sustainable development. The mission of WIPO was to promote a positive culture of IP and Member States had a collective responsibility to ensure that WIPO could deliver. Consensus on complex issues such as those regarding the program and budget for the 2024-2025 biennium required constructive discussions, mutual respect and understanding. The forthcoming Diplomatic Conferences in 2024 would require effective preparation to ensure their success. With regard to GRs and TK, Germany would again contribute €15,000 to the WIPO Voluntary Fund to facilitate participation by representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It was to be hoped that long-standing obstacles to the conclusion of a design law treaty could be overcome. WIPO should contribute actively to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and, in conjunction with other Geneva-based institutions, identify areas for input in that process. The work of the SCCR was complex and required time and dedication. The traditional consensus on the allocation of time between agenda items in that Committee should be maintained. The scope of a future treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations should reflect technical developments. The second revised draft of the treaty (SCCR/43/3) provided a sound basis for future work. Germany was keen to learn more about how other Member States dealt with exceptions and limitations for certain organizations and purposes, as well as for people with disabilities other than print disabilities. In that regard, it would welcome further exchanges on the basis of the draft work program adopted by the Committee in 2023 (SCCR/43/8). It was also pursuing discussions on issues such as the resale right and challenges for copyright in the digital environment. WIPO should heed calls for the further development, harmonization and improvement of the patent system. Germany welcomed the decision of the SCP to address the issue of AI inventorship and called for substantive discussions on the technical and legal questions regarding the relationship between AI and IP. Ongoing discussions and updates from technical experts on such subjects as the patentability of inventions using AI and created by AI, the use of AI for patent examination procedures, and AI technology capabilities and applications were welcome. In view of the opportunities and challenges arising with AI, the sharing of experiences and information on those topics in the Committee was beneficial. Other areas requiring more work included patent quality, including with regard to opposition systems, and the confidentiality of communications between clients and their patent advisors. In terms of patents and health, Germany would follow closely the sharing session among Member States on practices involving the licensing of medical technologies for the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of COVID-19, including examples of compulsory and voluntary licensing, at the Committee's next session in October 2023. Germany welcomed the continued growth in the number of patent applications filed in 2022 under the PCT. The German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA) had processed 7,005 international applications in the national phase that year, more than 6,300 of which had been filed by applicants from outside Germany. All Member States should take full advantage of the PCT System. European Union legislation to protect non-agricultural products under the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications would be ready shortly. Protection for those geographical indications would further enhance the attractiveness of the Lisbon System. Germany welcomed the decision to extend the mandate of the IGC for the period 2024-2025. Much remained to be done in order to achieve consensus on

an international legal instrument that took into account the interests of holders of TK and TCEs and, at the same time, did not have an adverse effect on the functioning of the international IP system. Germany welcomed progress on the implementation of projects under the WIPO DA. With the lifting of restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Patent and Trademark Office was again sending experts to participate in person in the meetings of various WIPO bodies, including the PCT Working Group, IGC, SCP, the SCT, the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System and the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System. In October 2022, the Office and WIPO had co-hosted a multi-day workshop on the examination of supplementary protection certificates for examiners of GDIP Albania in October 2022. In May 2023, the Office had worked closely with WIPO, the German Federal Ministry of Justice, the German Federal Court of Justice and the German Federal Patent Court to organize the WIPO Master Class on Intellectual Property Adjudication in Munich, Germany. More than 30 international and national judges had attended the Master Class.

64. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking in its national capacity, said that it acknowledged the involvement of Member States in preparing the Proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2024/25 and found the emphasis on activities related to innovation and green technologies encouraging. It was pleased to note the report on decisions that had been adopted by the PBC (A/64/7). Ghana had an abundance of TK, TCEs and GRs and the Delegation commended the progress made on the work program of the IGC. The Delegation welcomed the opportunity to tackle emerging issues, and it looked forward to the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with them. It was to be hoped that they would yield favorable outcomes and enhance the legitimacy of the IP system.

65. The Delegation of Greece said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. The Delegation noted with satisfaction the positive financial result reported by WIPO, in spite of market volatility and the unstable geopolitical situation. The PCT and Madrid Systems, which remained robust, had no doubt contributed to that result. Greece wished to highlight the need for a sustainable and accessible IP system that delivered high-quality services. Technical assistance was required to build a dependable global IP system that could support technological development and economic growth. In Greece, support for innovation and creativity continued to guide the efforts of the IP authorities. The Hellenic Industrial Property Organization had assumed responsibility for trademarks in May 2022 – making it the sole authority in the country for dealing with IPRs – and had worked hard to clear a backlog of trademark applications. It had facilitated access to the patent system by subsidizing search fees, which, combined with incentives for innovative entities, had contributed to an increase of 12 per cent in patent filings. Digitalization of procedures and improvement of IT infrastructure were ongoing. The Government had rolled out various educational programs and activities to raise awareness of the importance of IPRs and their enforcement. In the area of legislation, Greece had prepared and tabled for adoption a bill to ratify the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs. The Hellenic Copyright Organization (HCO), which was the competent national authority for all copyright and related rights issues, was committed to ensuring a high level of protection for rights holders. Recognizing that education and training could help to foster respect for copyright and related rights, the HCO ran a number of educational and training programs for judges, lawyers, teachers and students throughout the country. It also assisted the Committee for the Notification of Copyright and Related Rights Infringement in tackling cases of online piracy, in which respect it had handed down around 130 decisions. In addition, the HCO cooperated closely with WIPO under an MoU on alternative dispute resolution.

66. The Delegation of Grenada, noting the cooperation agreement that had been signed between Grenada and WIPO on the installation of the cloud-based IPAS system, said that the

country was striving to develop a digital economy and facilitate the participation of its citizens in global IP registration mechanisms. The Government planned to host a sub-regional workshop on draft patent legislation and regulations in conjunction with WIPO, which had supplied technical assistance in the matter. Work on a legal and regulatory framework for geographical indications was nearing completion and there were plans to register geographical indications for Grenada nutmeg, Grenada cocoa and Grenada rum. To mark World Intellectual Property Day in 2023, the country's national IP office had been joined by WIPO and the University of the West Indies in holding a lecture on women in the creative economy. The lecture had been attended by a broad cross-section of society. Grenada appreciated ongoing support provided by the WIPO Division for Latin America and the Caribbean.

67. The Delegation of Guatemala, aligning itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC, said that as IP had become a cross-cutting pillar in national economic development, countries had chosen to develop strategies and public policies on the issue. Guatemala, recognizing the benefits obtained from the use of different IP systems, had decided to back those tools by including them in its economic agenda to achieve objectives that would benefit various development sectors. It was for that reason that in 2022, through the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT), the Government launched the "Guatemala, Amazing and Unstoppable" country brand, which had three dimensions: first, tourism; second, exports; and third, attracting investment. Guatemala was an entrepreneurial and highly competitive country with creative people who worked hard and had big dreams. In addition, the IP registry had carried out activities and projects in support of SMEs, the creative industries and the establishment of a training program on various cutting-edge issues in the field. The aim was to promote innovation and thereby promote scientific and technological research, so as to create new models of business and entrepreneurship. Lastly, the Delegation wished to thank WIPO, the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Copyright and Creative Industries Sector for the effective support and assistance they had provided in building technical capacities, developing projects and providing ongoing training to the national office.

68. The Delegation of Hungary said that the global economy was going through unprecedented challenges, with two major shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. At the same time, rapid technological development was impacting daily life the world over. The restructuring of the global economy showed a greater balance, with more balanced capabilities for technological development and strong competition between East and West. The politicization of the international economic arena, however, was reverting to dividing the world into geopolitical blocks. Such division constituted a threat to the global economy and impeded recovery from global challenges. The Government of Hungary therefore advocated for connectivity and rational sharing of labor in a spirit of cooperation between East and West, without geopolitical division, in the best interests of all peoples. Hungary was a good example, serving as a meeting point for investment from East and West in the electric automotive industry. The Hungarian people had benefitted significantly from Hungary having become the European hub for such a high-tech and innovative new industry. According to WIPO, Hungary currently ranked fifth globally for high-tech production and tenth for the provision of high-tech experts, despite barely making the top 100 countries in respect of population size. The number of students applying for engineering, science and information and communications technology faculties had increased by 34 per cent over the past year, while the number of research and development engineers in employment in Hungary had doubled. The number of SMEs reporting product innovation had increased by 73 per cent. East to West cooperation should thus not be viewed as a risk, but rather as an opportunity that could yield significant benefits for all.

69. The Delegation of Iceland said that it was important for Member States not only to have access to information, technical resources and guidelines, but also to be able to interact with the Organization's experts when needed. Iceland took note of changes in the regulations governing

the PCT and Madrid systems and strongly supported the ongoing assistance being provided to the innovative system of Ukraine. It also welcomed the recently conducted global IP perception survey, the results of which would be made available in September 2023. The continued focus by WIPO on the contribution of women to the global economy as innovators and entrepreneurs was welcome. To mark World Intellectual Property Day in April 2023, Iceland had held a conference featuring presentations on IPRs by leading women innovators and IP sector representatives. In 2023, two Icelandic innovators had been nominated for the EPO Inventor Award. The Government had undertaken several initiatives in the previous year on innovation and IP, including a visit by an Icelandic delegation to Singapore to learn from that country's success in connecting IP and the innovation community. The decision in 2023 by the Grand Board of Appeal of EUIPO deeming the country name Iceland descriptive and thus not registrable as a trademark had marked a turning point in efforts to strengthen protection against the registration of country names as trademarks. Country names should enjoy similar protection to that provided for State emblems and flags under Article 6^{ter} of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

70. The Delegation of India said that WIPO had a key role to play in the global development of an IPRs system that enabled innovation and sustainable and inclusive development, and it welcomed the Organization's focus on young and female entrepreneurs and SMEs. The IPR landscape and innovation ecosystem in India had undergone significant changes over the previous decade. India had acceded to various WIPO instruments, and there had been an increase in domestic filing of patents with the number of patents granted rising almost five-fold. Regarding innovation, India was home to more than 100 unicorn companies and had emerged as the third largest ecosystem for start-ups globally, with almost 100,000 start-ups. India had made progress in implementing the SDGs and had been assisting countries from the Global South to achieve the SDGs through development partnerships. India was committed to working with WIPO to build the capacities of Member States, and it was hoped that new external offices could be opened as soon as possible. The evaluation of existing external offices should be separated from the opening of new offices, with both tasks the responsibility of the WIPO Secretariat.

71. The Delegation of Indonesia, speaking in its national capacity, said that it was vital to uphold robust IP protection frameworks that balanced rewarding creators and innovators with ensuring the free flow of knowledge for the benefit of society. Indonesia, as the Chair of ASEAN in 2023, was highlighting the pivotal role of the Asian region in regional and global economic recovery and growth. Promoting IPRs in the region could build a conducive environment for people to innovate and create, thus fostering such growth. Indonesia had deposited the instrument of accession for the Nice Agreement Concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks; accession would improve the national trademark system to meet international standards. In December 2022, Indonesia had enacted an IP-related regulation that recognized and safeguarded the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in particular in the context of GRs, TK and TCEs. The aim was to establish a legal basis for the protection of the rights and interests of those groups, which would be important to preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Indonesia, while encouraging innovation and protecting TK. International cooperation and partnerships in the field of IP would make it possible to shape a landscape that nurtured creativity, embraced diversity and fostered economic growth for the betterment of society. To that end, Indonesia would sign a cooperation agreement with WIPO to establish a national IP training center that would offer a variety of training and educational programs. Lastly, it was the collective responsibility of all WIPO Member States to contribute positively to the two Diplomatic Conferences to be held in 2024 and to work towards achieving successful outcomes.

72. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) said that IPRs had been enshrined in national law since 1925. The country attached great importance to IP assets and their impact on development. IP played an essential role in fostering the innovation and technology that were

essential for sustainable development. WIPO should help to increase the capacity of developing countries to meet their development goals through technical assistance and the implementation of national IP and innovation policies and strategies. The WIPO DA should be mainstreamed across all of the Organization's activities, taking into account countries' development priorities. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) welcomed the organization of the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources, and expressed the hope that WIPO would at some point be in position to hold a diplomatic conference on a binding instrument for the protection of TK and TCEs.

73. The Delegation of Iraq stressed the importance of IP as a multifaceted tool of development. Iraq had made a considerable effort to complete its legislative framework for the protection and promotion of IPRs by establishing a national IPRs center and building the capacity of staff at the Iraqi Patent Office, in particular since the country's accession to the PCT on April 30, 2022. Iraq remained committed to constructive cooperation and active participation in all events organized by the Organization.

74. The Delegation of Israel said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. IP was central to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, which were key drivers of the economy. Israel welcomed the efforts of WIPO to support a balanced and well-functioning global IP ecosystem for the benefit of all, its initiative on IP and gender, and the WIPO Conversation on Intellectual Property and Frontier Technologies. The Israel Patent Office was investing considerable resources to make information and its services accessible online, reduce the regulatory burden and increase user satisfaction. The number of applications filed in Israel to register IP, in particular patents and trademarks, had increased significantly in recent years, underlining the importance of IPRs for business in the country. The number of patent applications filed had risen by 10 per cent in 2022 over the previous year. Promoting AI-based technology was a priority for Israel, which was monitoring legal developments abroad with regard to creation and inventions made by AI. Initiatives by WIPO to facilitate access by SMEs to the IP system were laudable.

75. The Delegation of Italy said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, and continued to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Innovation and IP protection were vital levers for boosting economic growth, building knowledge and promoting Italian products and services. Therefore, Italy remained committed to facilitating access to IPRs at the national, regional and international levels for start-ups and SMEs in particular. It also strived to support research centers and academia and to promote public-private partnerships. Recognizing that IP – as an effective tool for protecting critical and strategic technologies, including clean and green tech – dovetailed with SDG 9, on industry, innovation and infrastructure, Italy urged the Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As part of the global IP community, all Member States needed to take action for the benefit of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, bearing in mind the close link between IP rights and investment in research and innovation, technology transfer and trade. A more inclusive and effective IP ecosystem would benefit both businesses and communities worldwide. Thus, Italy spared no effort in promoting IP in the global market and protecting intangible assets both online and offline. Italy supported the Organization's goals, its work program on the ongoing normative agenda and its growing portfolio of business support initiatives. It noted with satisfaction the recent progress made with the Lisbon System, particularly in the area of geographical representations, and hoped to see further improvements in the functioning of the Lisbon Registry in line with Member States' expectations. To maximize the potential of geographical indications – which drove economic empowerment and promoted small local producers, especially in rural areas – the Lisbon Registry must have the financial and human resources required to meet the needs of its

growing membership. Lastly, Italy awaited with anticipation future developments in the field of copyright.

76. The Delegation of Jamaica said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC and expressed appreciation for the support provided by WIPO to the work of the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), through various training programs on the Madrid Protocol, the PCT and the Hague System. Those training sessions had renewed local interest in IP and led to the recognition of Jamaica as a country where the protection of IP was valued and sought after. Participation by WIPO representatives in webinars on Jamaica's copyright and related rights had been of significant value to participants. The Government of Jamaica would continue to participate in the normative work of WIPO through the various committees and bodies, in particular the IGC. The work of the WIPO SCT was particularly relevant for Jamaica; the Government would continue to engage constructively with the Standing Committee with regard to its proposal on the protection of country names and geographical names of national significance. Lastly, the Delegation appreciated the support provided by WIPO in developing new legislation and working towards the full automation of the JIPO.

77. The Delegation of Japan said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and reaffirmed its support for the Ukrainian people. Enhancing the use of regional offices was essential to the further development of the IP ecosystem. Working with the WIPO Japan Office, the country could help to improve WIPO services by gathering information on international applicants in Japan. The Delegation looked forward to the expansion of WIPO support for, *inter alia*, young people, diversity and inclusion, SMEs, start-ups and universities. Japan had the largest number of WIPO GREEN partners in the world, and the Japan Patent Office (JPO) was working with WIPO and other global stakeholders to expand that network, while also supporting the WIPO efforts through voluntary contributions. In addition, JPO had taken steps to enable IP offices and users to analyze green transformation technological trends, and had published a survey report that provided an overview of trends in global patent applications in that area. Lastly, at the World Exposition due to be held in Osaka, Japan, in 2025, the importance of IP and ideas to promote IP use to achieve SDGs would be highlighted.

78. The Delegation of Jordan said that it welcomed the Organization's efforts to support IP by realigning its work with the needs and priorities of Member States through the creation of programs with concrete results. The various reports prepared by the WIPO Secretariat constituted an important mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the Organization's activities. Its technical assistance, meanwhile, had had a direct impact on the promotion of innovation and creativity in local communities, in particular among young people, women and SMEs. A highlight of cooperation between Jordan and WIPO had been their joint project on IP and entrepreneurship for women in the country's Petra region. The project, the first of its kind in the Arab region, had benefited from direct guidance by the Director General and the Deputy Director General in charge of the Regional and National Development Sector. It had served to consolidate the cooperation framework for sharing information and experiences on the protection of industrial property rights with key relevant bodies and international institutions, with a view to setting up a support system to facilitate the registration, management and commercialization of industrial property rights for the "Rose Hands" collective mark, which had been devised for the Petra region. The Delegation looked forward to further cooperation in that regard. Summer Youth Camps had been organized for 2022 and 2023 on creativity, innovation and IP. Constructive dialog to foster political will and consensus would be needed in order to obtain a positive outcome at the forthcoming Diplomatic Conferences.

79. The Delegation of Kazakhstan was grateful to WIPO for taking progressive and effective measures to protect IPRs holders and compensate them fairly for the use of their creations. Kazakhstan was taking steps to improve legislation, digitalize services, expand professional

training and strengthen international cooperation in the area of IP. It had also simplified procedures to improve access to IP registration and protection services. A recently adopted roadmap for the development of IP over the next three years contained specific measures for strengthening coordination between public authorities, combating piracy and enhancing legal advisory services in matters of IP. In cooperation with WIPO, Kazakhstan was paving the way for the establishment of TISCs. It had hosted a WIPO Summer School for the first time in July 2022 and looked forward to doing so again in September 2023. Discussions were ongoing regarding the accession of Kazakhstan to the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs and the Marrakesh Treaty. Lastly, the Delegation noted with appreciation the progress made by the various WIPO committees over the past year.

80. The Delegation of Kenya said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. IP could be a powerful catalyst for growth and Kenya appreciated the ongoing support provided by WIPO to IP officials and practitioners in the country. WIPO was helping Kenya to upgrade its IP infrastructure, particularly the IPAS, for which the online filing modules for patents and trademarks were currently being installed. IP would play a critical role in achieving the Government's ambition of increasing the contribution of its manufacturing sector from 7 per cent to 20 per cent. The Delegation welcomed progress in preparation for the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources and commended WIPO and Algeria for co-hosting the regional meeting on that matter in Algiers in June 2023. That meeting had afforded African Member States the opportunity to discuss substantive issues relating to the draft instrument. Kenya, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, would be hosting the third edition of the Kenya Innovation Week, which would bring together innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers and IP experts, from November 27 to December 1, 2023.

81. The Delegation of Latvia said that it aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. The Delegation shared WIPO's vision for a strategic and hands-on approach to supporting the development and dissemination of new technologies, inventions and artistic expressions, the establishment of a balanced and inclusive IP system that reflected the needs and interests of all Member States, and the bridging of the global IP knowledge gap by facilitating the sharing of IP-related information, best practices and capacity-building initiatives. The Delegation was grateful for WIPO support for the innovation and technology support structure in the Baltic States; the Baltic Technology Transfer Offices Network played a central role in the development and innovation of technology transfer processes, such as science and technology parks, and innovation centers. The country looked forward to continuing to work with WIPO on new initiatives in the area of IP. Finally, Latvia condemned the unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which was having a catastrophic and lasting impact on the innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem of Ukraine.

82. The Delegation of Lesotho, aligning itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, said that it was pleased to note the assistance that WIPO was providing to facilitate regional meetings ahead of the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Generic Resources. It looked forward to the finalization of a text. WIPO had assisted Lesotho in developing its human capital and infrastructure, launching the IPAS 4.0, developing a national IP policy and strategy that would lead to institutional IP policies, and carrying out a project to capture and validate the data of trademark files. Lesotho requested further assistance in the following areas: reviewing its IP legislative framework to take technological developments and treaty obligations into account; helping the weaving community, which consisted mainly of women, to leverage its IP, improve its business and access markets; focusing on patent search reports, business plans, knowledge transfers,

commercialization and market access through the Appropriate Technology Project to build the capacity of the National University of Lesotho Innovation Hub; implementing the IP for SMEs project to help entrepreneurs to leverage IP and add value to their products and services; and strengthening the capacity of collective management organizations. The Delegation looked forward to holding outreach activities alongside WIPO to empower universities, research institutions, young people and communities. WIPO assistance to modernize the national IP system and make IP more accessible was appreciated.

83. The Delegation of Liberia said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. With the support of WIPO, Liberia had implemented the IPAS and established TISCs in five tertiary institutions. Furthermore, two WIPO-sponsored projects were underway in the country and the Liberian collective management organization was fully operational. Liberia would need further support for its new IP development plan. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa required assistance in order to ensure economic recovery. A lack of infrastructure in Africa was an obstacle to realizing its full potential for innovation and creativity. The vision of the Liberian IP development plan was to build an IP-driven, knowledge-based economy that ensured sustainable socioeconomic development. Liberia would welcome assistance in making that transition. SMEs required technical assistance and capacity-building in the areas of patent drafting, branding and packaging. The country was in the process of ratifying the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances, the Arusha Protocol for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants and the Kampala Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights. Over the previous two years, a representative of Liberia had chaired the administrative and ministerial councils of the ARIPO, during which time the Organization had adopted the Kampala Protocol in August 2021. The comprehensive IP legal framework in Liberia ensured full protection of trademarks, designs, geographical indications, patents, copyright and related works. Further support was needed to strengthen collective management efforts and to carry out a study on the economic impact of creativity to calculate the potential and the value of the country's creative industry.

84. The Delegation of Libya said that the circumstances in that country prevented it from taking part in many WIPO events and activities and thanked WIPO for its significant work in the area of IP. The Libyan Authority for Scientific Research, through its IP Department, maintained contact with inventors, creators and innovators and assisted them in registering their patents, literary and artistic works, and trademarks. The Authority had launched a number of prizes to foster pioneering work, innovation and scientific excellence, awarded to outstanding practitioners in various categories. The IP Department was continuing to work with the Industrial Property Office of the Ministry of Industry, which is responsible for the registration of national patents, and had proposed working on a program for the international filing of applications by inventors. Substantive and technical procedures in that regard had been initiated. Libya was grateful for assistance provided by WIPO to the Office in the form of a training workshop on international applications. The IP Department was also in the process of updating outmoded IP laws. The Delegation looked forward to receiving special assistance from WIPO, after a period in which there had been little communication, with a view to creating a support mechanism for Libyan creators and inventors, in line with international laws and regulations.

85. The Delegation of Lithuania said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. It welcomed the WIPO report on the impact that the war of aggression being waged by the Russian Federation on Ukraine was having on the Ukrainian innovation and creativity sector and ecosystem. It appreciated the continued support of WIPO for mitigating the adverse effects of the war and addressing the immediate, medium- and long-term impacts, and looked forward to further annual reporting on the issue. The Delegation condemned in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified

military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which grossly violated international law and had been used to legitimize IP violations domestically. The Delegation had serious concerns about the further enjoyment of WIPO benefits by the Russian Federation, such as the allocation of WIPO financing for the external office in that country. Promoting innovation and protecting IP had always been a priority for the Government of Lithuania. It had previously adopted the IP Development Program, which was aimed at boosting the use of IP, preventing IP violations and raising public awareness. Lithuania had collaborated closely with WIPO to develop projects dedicated to SMEs, young people, women and synergy between business and science. Such international and regional cooperation had led to the 2022 launch of the Baltic States Technology Transfer Offices Network. It was grateful to the WIPO leadership and the Division for Transition and Developed Countries for their collaboration.

86. The Delegation of Madagascar said that it fully aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and the LDCs Group. Madagascar appreciated the changes made both within the Organization and in its relations with Member States, particularly in connection with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reorganization of WIPO. It also appreciated the efforts made by the Organization to promote collaboration with Member States' industrial property offices in administering industrial property and strengthening the role of IP in the economic development of those countries. Noting the efforts made so far to establish legal infrastructure for the protection of geographical indications in Madagascar, the Delegation reiterated its willingness to act as an interface between WIPO and the stakeholders in the project for the promotion of the Bongolava pink peppercorn. Madagascar set great store by the effective enforcement and strengthening of IPRs protection. It stood ready to participate fully in discussions on the conclusion of a design law treaty and the establishment of a regulatory framework for GRs, TK and folklore. According to statistics, the number of patent applications had risen by 14 per cent over the previous year, with most of those applications made by residents. In addition, the number of patents granted had risen by more than 15 per cent compared with 2021. The number of applications for the registration of industrial designs in 2022 had quadrupled compared with 2021.

87. The Delegation of Malawi said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. A well-balanced IP system was key to the country fulfilling its aspirations under the Malawi Vision 2063, the roadmap for transforming it from a least developed country into a high-middle-income economy. Achievement of that vision hinged on the ability to harness IP for innovation, which would stimulate prosperity. It was imperative to raise awareness of IP in that regard. Experience had shown that the mere existence of IP legislation was insufficient to deliver economic benefits. The IP system must also be aligned with countries' economic structure, plans and aspirations. The Organization's focus on impactful interventions in the support that it provided to Malawi and other countries was therefore especially welcome. The national high-level conference on IP, innovation and the updating of the Malawi Vision 2063, which had been held in March 2023 with the support of WIPO, had generated considerable interest in IP and demand for support by various stakeholders. The inclusive approach adopted by WIPO in the provision of technical assistance to Malawi, including with regard to an appropriate technology project and the development of its soon-to-be-launched TK strategy, was welcome and should be applied to the Organization's normative work too.

88. The Delegation of Malaysia said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Lao (People's Democratic Republic of) on behalf of ASEAN and by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It was pleased to see the continued strong financial performance of WIPO. The Government of Malaysia had been implementing amendments to patent, trademark and copyright laws and a new Geographical Indications Act. It was also improving its IP service delivery system and providing training to patent and trademark examiners in accordance with the new laws and regulations. Malaysia was grateful for the assistance and expertise provided by WIPO and other IP offices, especially in

capacity-building. Following World Intellectual Property Day 2022, Malaysia had been promoting the use of IP among female entrepreneurs nationwide by assisting them in protecting IP and highlighting the importance of IP to business growth. Two programs had been completed in May 2023 with the organizational support of WIPO, and further programs were planned. Over the previous year, Malaysia had been participating in the DA project on IP and gastronomic tourism and had showcased traditional Malaysian food during the international workshop on the sidelines of the meeting of the CDIP in October 2022. The project had benefited stakeholders by raising awareness of the role of IP in gastronomic tourism and helping them to identify IP tools for the promotion of culinary traditions across their value chains. The Delegation was grateful that the second phase of the project was included in the next WIPO biennial program and budget, and looked forward to working with the Brands and Designs Sector again, as well as with Cameroon, Morocco and Peru.

89. The Delegation of Mali said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation welcomed the continued and multifaceted support of WIPO, particularly in building the capacity of IP stakeholders at the national level, evaluating and updating the national IP development strategy and establishing a master's degree program at the University of Legal Sciences in Bamako. Actions taken by the Government to promote IP included the intensification of training and awareness-raising for target audiences such as the media, young inventors, innovators and entrepreneurs and fledgling enterprises; the organization of economic events such as the National Brands Week; and the establishment of a national labelling scheme for local products with strong commercial potential and national identity, including Bogolan, Taoudenni rock salt, mangoes and shea butter. As a result of these actions, Mali ranked first out of the 17 OAPI member states for the performance of national liaison structures in promoting industrial property, as assessed at the previous session of the OAPI Administrative Council in Douala, Cameroon, in December 2022. The Delegation considered IP an essential lever for its socio-economic development and would like the priority objectives contained in its future strategy to underpin its cooperation with WIPO in order to maximize the impact of the Organization's technical assistance on the ground. An emphasis could be placed on setting up a national innovation platform to transform existing IP potential into tangible, marketable assets. The Delegation also required assistance in leveraging the results of a study conducted to identify the needs of Malian industrial companies in the area of technology transfer.

90. The Delegation of Mauritius, aligning itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, said that it appreciated the assistance it had received from WIPO in reviewing the country's legislative framework and enacting the Industrial Property Act. The Mauritius Artificial Intelligence Assistant (Maia) chatbot had also recently been launched. WIPO experts had provided advice to facilitate accession to the PCT, the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks and the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs. WIPO had also provided support to develop the national IP development plan, modernize the services offered by the IP office of Mauritius and build capacity. Ongoing WIPO efforts to assist small island developing States in leveraging IP were welcome. More tailored programs were needed, as were dedicated TISCs to foster capacity-building, technology transfer and licensing in such States, in order to address issues such as climate change. One approach to dealing with the shortage of expertise in those States could be to form teams of experts for regions or groups of countries. The WIPO Green initiative created opportunities for women entrepreneurs and should focus more on climate initiatives for small island developing States. The Delegation looked forward to the Diplomatic Conferences on a Design Law Treaty and an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

91. The Delegation of Mexico said that it appreciated the vision of Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, for the Organization's work based on the MMTSP 2022–2026. It noted with

satisfaction the implementation of cooperation activities that promoted innovation and creativity based on IP, had a positive impact on people's lives and contributed to economic development. Mexico welcomed the commitment made by WIPO to align its activities with the 2030 Agenda, as well as its decision to make the SDGs the focal point of World Intellectual Property Day 2024. In conjunction with the project of the CDIP to increase the role of women in innovation and entrepreneurship, in which Mexico had actively participated, the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property had established the Network of Women Innovators and Industrial Property – the first of its kind. Within the framework of the COVID-19-related services and support package, WIPO continued to define actions for the benefit of the geographical indication “*Seda de Cajonos*” in the state of Oaxaca. In the area of copyright, the National Copyright Institute (INDAUTOR) had strengthened its collaboration with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center and had established an effective system for online mediation and conciliation meetings. The Delegation stated that its Government was taking actions that promoted industrial property while advancing the cause of indigenous peoples, such as the “Original” program, which provided a platform for the creative work of indigenous, Afrodescendant and mestizo communities. The Delegation shared the commitment of WIPO to protect TK and TCEs and was grateful to be able to work hand in hand with the Organization on issues of national importance. It hoped to continue collaborating with WIPO to implement projects that met its needs. Indeed, Mexico and WIPO had a common vision of IP as a tool for fostering development and ensuring that nobody was left behind.

92. The Delegation of Mongolia said that it was grateful to the WIPO Director General and staff for their continued support in implementing projects of vital importance for creators, inventors and other IP stakeholders in Mongolia, including an initiative to update the information system of the Intellectual Property Office of Mongolia to enable the provision of e-filing services. Mongolia had also improved its IP legal framework to promote the digitalization of IPRs management and the commercialization of IP for the benefit of the national economy. It was particularly grateful to the Division for Asia and the Pacific for its excellent work and assistance and looked forward to receiving the results of the Geographical Indications Project. Lastly, recognizing the key role of IP in diversifying exports and improving the competitiveness of Mongolia and its businesses, and despite budget restraints, the Government planned to increase the number of staff at its IP office.

93. The Delegation of Montenegro said that it appreciated WIPO efforts to protect IPRs in the face of technological developments and numerous global challenges. The support of WIPO was vital as Montenegro strove to improve its IP system and provide a high level of protection for IPRs. The Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism (MEDT), a leading IP authority in Montenegro, was designing and implementing actions to create a sustainable and efficient IP system. Amendments to the existing laws on trademarks and patents had entered into force in January 2023, and the country had also acceded to the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks (STLT). Other successes had been the accession of Montenegro to the European Patent Convention and its joining of the European Patent Organization in 2022. The IP Strategy of Montenegro for the period 2023–2026, developed with WIPO support, would be adopted by the Government in summer 2023. In the previous 12 months, WIPO cooperation with Montenegro had involved the participation of MEDT staff members in webinars, seminars and meetings with Division for Transition and Developed Countries (TDC) and the Copyright Law Division. A representative of Montenegro had attended the 47th session of the IGC in June 2023. For World Intellectual Property Day 2023, MEDT had worked with the Innovation Fund of Montenegro and the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro to organize a hybrid seminar on women in IP. A WIPO representative had participated in the event and a message from the WIPO Director General had been played. It was expected that WIPO collaboration would continue through various joint activities, including an event to promote the new IP Strategy of Montenegro. The Delegation was grateful to TDC for its cooperation and

understanding of the needs of the system for the protection and enforcement of IPRs in Montenegro.

94. The Delegation of Morocco said that the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC) had undertaken initiatives to spur digital transformation and support the national economy. In 2022, national industrial property indicators had recorded positive developments and Morocco had increased its ranking in the GII. Indicators had also revealed positive trends in applications for Moroccan appellations of origin. Morocco was almost back to its pre-pandemic level of performance. Two laws had been passed to enhance the protection of copyright and related rights in the digital landscape. The Delegation remained committed to engaging in South-South cooperation, prioritizing welfare and collaborating with Member States and WIPO teams. The Delegation confirmed that the country was eager to share its expertise in order to promote an efficient and productive IP system and it remained committed to multilateralism.

95. The Delegation of Mozambique said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and of Cabo Verde on behalf of CPLP, and welcomed the decision by WIPO to make women and IP the theme of World Intellectual Property Day in 2023. WIPO had provided Mozambique with technical assistance to build institutional capacity and to implement projects relating to the modernization and automation of the industrial property rights registration system and the system of geographical indications. The Cabrito de Tete (Tete goat) product was now being marketed bearing a geographical indication. The registration of other products, such as aromatic rice from Zambezia and Mozambique shrimp, and the mapping of the coffee industry, taking in coffee from Ibo, Chimanimani and Gorongosa, were underway. The visit by the Director General of WIPO to Mozambique in November 2022 had provided an opportunity to review the IP situation in the country and future projects, including with regard to IP strategy and policy, IP training for diplomats and copyright managers, and management packages for SMEs and universities. As part of the country's five-year Government program for the period 2020-2024, efforts would be focused on the ongoing revision of the national IP strategy and the drafting of IP policy at the local level.

96. The Delegation of Namibia, aligning itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, said that the challenges facing humanity were an opportunity for the global IP system to help to create solutions and further sustainable and inclusive development. Namibia remained committed to strengthening a balanced national IP system that favored development. The Delegation was grateful for the assistance that WIPO had provided through projects, the "Women and IP: Accelerating innovation and creativity" campaign, capacity-building, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing programs that would bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to knowledge and technology. It was important to protect and preserve TK,GRs and TCEs. In that regard, Member States should increase their collaboration with a view to concluding legal frameworks that safeguarded the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples and fostered respect for their invaluable contribution to humanity's cultural heritage. Namibia remained steadfast in its resolve to promote sustainable development and mitigate climate change.

97. The Delegation of Nepal said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. Recent global progress in the IP sector has been encouraging and the focus of WIPO initiatives on impact-driven programs aimed at changing lives and livelihood through IP was welcomed. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2022-2031 had specific targets and actions on IP, innovation and creativity. In that regard, Nepal appreciated the WIPO graduation package for LDCs and the WIPO deliverables aimed at contributing to the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Delegation was grateful for the briefing sessions organized by WIPO on the implementation progress of deliverables. Nepal greatly

valued its continued collaboration with WIPO to build national technology and innovation capacities to enhance the country's productive capacity and competitiveness, as it was set to graduate from LDC status in 2026. Nepal had requested WIPO support to establish TISCs. Lastly, it appreciated the preparations being made for the Diplomatic Conferences to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources and to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty.

98. The Delegation of New Zealand said that it supported the mandate of the IGC and its work, which covered issues that were of great importance to Māori and New Zealand as a whole. The Delegation looked forward to finding meaningful and workable solutions at the current session of the Assemblies. The Plant Variety Rights Act 2022 had recently entered into force and ensured that Māori participated in the examination of new plant varieties of indigenous species. It also established a Māori Plant Varieties Committee, which would have a decision-making mandate, and ensured that the scope of its activities was broad, demonstrating the willingness of New Zealand to meet its obligations to Māori. New Zealand would review its legislation on geographical indications to expand protection and incorporate the requirements of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand. The IP Office of New Zealand had reviewed its strategic capabilities and had developed a strategy to ensure that businesses and consumers thrived, improve services and keep stakeholders aware of developments.

99. The Delegation of Nicaragua said that discussing IP was an acknowledgement of the importance of creators, entrepreneurs, producers and innovators in contributing to and strengthening culture, education and the economy. Nicaragua was aware of the importance of IP to every sector in the country. IP was therefore a cross-cutting element within governmental IP strategies in the innovation and IP ecosystem, which benefited MSMEs, creators, artists, entrepreneurs and society in general. WIPO provided key support to the country's national and regional efforts to achieve national development goals, particularly those related to creativity, innovation and technology. The Delegation was grateful for the continuous assistance that WIPO had provided to Nicaragua through its national IP office. It valued the joint efforts of WIPO and Member States, which had proactively built capacities, collaborated with offices and cooperated bilaterally. The Delegation would continue to work towards WIPO goals and targets. It looked forward to the continuation of discussions at the current session of the Assemblies and hoped to make a positive contribution to them with a view to producing concrete agreements that would benefit all stakeholders in the creativity, innovation and IP ecosystem.

100. The Delegation of Niger, endorsing the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, said that it welcomed the tireless work of WIPO to implement its strategic priorities and promote and develop the IP system but wished to see the Organization place a greater emphasis on the socio-economic and cultural advancement of its Member States. Niger was grateful to the WIPO Director General for his able leadership and for the fresh impetus that he had given to the promotion of geographical indications since taking up his post. Against that backdrop, on April 4, 2023, the Government had registered four flagship Nigerien products with the OAPI: Kilichi du Niger dried meat and Violet de Galmi onion as protected geographical indications, and Tchoukou du Niger cheese and Maradi red goatskin as collective marks. It had also taken the initial steps to register Kilichi du Niger in the European Union, with the support of the Intellectual Property Rights and Innovation in Africa project, which had organized a trip to Sion on May 13–18, 2023, for all stakeholders to study Valais dried meats registered as protected geographical indications. A project to support the registration of the Violet de Galmi onion as a geographical indication was being finalized with funding from French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD), OAPI and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of and was due to be launched in September 2023. Niger would be grateful for the assistance of WIPO in making all the necessary arrangements

for those flagship products, and in rolling out a number of other activities under the national plan for the development of IP and the promotion of innovation drawn up by WIPO in 2019, whose implementation remained limited.

101. The Delegation of Nigeria said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The country's new Copyright Act, which took account of obligations under treaties ratified by Nigeria in 2017, had come into force in March 2023. The Act provided for increased penalties for infringements of copyright. WIPO, in cooperation with the Trademarks, Patents and Designs Registry of Nigeria, had conducted capacity-building activities to strengthen the country's IP regime, promote knowledge-sharing and build networks among practitioners at home and abroad. Responding to growing national demand, the Trademarks, Patents and Designs Registry and the WIPO Nigeria Office had co-hosted a workshop in June 2023 to raise awareness of the functions of the Hague Union and the benefits of joining the Hague System. The Delegation confirmed that Nigeria was keen to strengthen the capacity of the Office with a view to further disseminating knowledge and use of IP for development in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa.

102. The Delegation of Norway said that it welcomed ongoing efforts to improve Member States' ability to monitor the administration and finances of WIPO. It commended the International Bureau for its continued focus on securing the best available global services under the PCT and the Madrid and Hague Systems. Smooth systems, simplification and cost-saving were instrumental in increasing the use of such global IP services. It also welcomed the progress made by the Working Groups of the Madrid and Hague Unions in improving regulations, guidelines and practices. Norway supported the work of the SCCR towards a treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations. It hoped to see successful outcomes for the two diplomatic conferences in 2024. For World IP Day 2023, the Norwegian Industrial Property Office had run a successful campaign highlighting the important role of women in IP. The Delegation confirmed that the Government remained committed to improving diversity and inclusivity in the IP ecosystem, for example by encouraging women to study for technical qualifications. Norway had taken a number of steps to strengthen its IP system over the past year. For example, the STLT, to which Norway had acceded on December 1, 2022, had entered into force on March 1, 2023. Moreover, the Trademarks Act of Norway had been amended with effect from March 1, 2023, to implement legislation pursuant to Directive (EU) 2015/2436 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2015 to approximate the laws of the Member States relating to trademarks.

103. The Delegation of Oman said that the technical support provided by WIPO had contributed greatly to the development and enhancement of the country's IP services. Oman had made significant progress in its cooperation activities with WIPO, acceding to various international IP conventions and working with the Organization on many projects. Of the latter, the highlight had been the project to support the producers of high-quality Omani *luban* (frankincense oil) by protecting it as a geographical indication, with a view to enhancing efforts to market it in the region and internationally. WIPO had also assisted Oman in drafting its national IP strategy, the aim of which was to establish an effective national IP system and to develop the sector. Oman had further benefited from the expertise and technical advice provided by WIPO on substantive patent examinations for patent examiners. Overall, the progress made in cooperation with WIPO in various areas of IP was a source of satisfaction.

104. The Delegation of Pakistan said that efforts were being made to advance and modernize the country's IP system through policy, training and awareness-raising measures. A project and management platform had been launched to streamline the activities of the 47 TISCs throughout Pakistan. Given the global focus on the IP and innovation ecosystem in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was essential to embed the principle of equity in the IP regime across the areas of trade, public health and new technologies, with particular consideration for developing countries and LDCs. A sustained focus on enhancing and expanding

demand-driven and tailored support was also key. In that connection, Pakistan was implementing projects tailored to, *inter alia*, female entrepreneurs, small businesses and NGOs, in addition to projects on the empowerment of young people and on text and data mining for Africa. WIPO should mainstream the DA for the achievement of SDGs and an even distribution of the benefits of the global IP regime. Moreover, a more systematic operationalization of the principle of equitable geographic representation in the WIPO workforce and its key decision-making bodies remained of the utmost importance. Lastly, future work on WIPO external offices, including development of the terms of reference for their evaluation, must be guided by the principles of neutrality, objectivity, transparency and inclusiveness.

105. The Delegation of Panama said that it aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC and of Guatemala as the *pro tempore* Secretariat of the Subregional Forum of Ministers of Central America and the Dominican Republic. In recent years, the country had worked on strengthening IP, especially through the National Industrial Property Office. To that end, it was about to launch the IPAS, provided by WIPO. With the collaboration of WIPO, it had been able to develop a bill on technology transfers for universities and national research centers that was aimed mainly at establishing a legal framework on the transfer of technologies and knowledge. In addition, with WIPO assistance, it would also soon launch the national IP project for female entrepreneurs in order to develop and implement initiatives that involved women in the IP ecosystem, supported them in overcoming entrepreneurial obstacles, facilitated the creation of networks for women, and developed skills and knowledge in the field of IP. With the support of WIPO, Panama would continue to work actively on implementing the projects that had arisen from the Assemblies. Lastly, the Delegation wished to thank the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean for its support for IP in Panama.

106. The Delegation of Paraguay said that 2023 marked the fifth anniversary of a Government that had been committed to pursuing a digital agenda from the outset. Its aim was to provide citizens and system users with more efficient and less costly services in a shorter timeframe while protecting the environment. In that regard and as a result of hard work, electronic dossiers would be used as of the end of July 2023 as part of the digitalization of historical archives and the use of WIPO IT tools, such as the IPAS and WIPO Publix. The electronic dossiers would facilitate and decentralize administrative processes. In recent years, Paraguay had ratified five international WIPO-administered treaties, demonstrating its ongoing support for the multilateral IP system. Regarding its SDG commitments, it currently had an institutional waste management system that was complemented by large recycling campaigns. That initiative had been successfully and positively publicized and was gradually becoming standard practice in other public institutions in Paraguay. As part of ongoing efforts to combat all forms of discrimination in accessing the benefits of IP, the National Directorate of Intellectual Property (DINAPI) had created a schedule of activities and an action plan to improve equality of opportunities between men and women. It had also been working with local communities, civil society representatives and Indigenous Peoples to effectively protect their TK, which was part of their national identity. That work was in line with the vision of WIPO, as reflected in the Organization's decision to address the protection of TK at the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

107. The Delegation of Peru said that the positive economic, social and cultural impact of the IP system on countries around the world was beyond doubt. Against that backdrop, Peru continued to take steps to bring the IP system closer to the community through the country's innovators, creators and entrepreneurs, especially those from indigenous and rural communities and including children and young people. Peru was due to hand over the *pro tempore* presidency of the Latin American Network on Intellectual Property and Gender, established in June 2021. It wished to thank WIPO and the regional offices making up the network for their support and their efforts in promoting the network's activities, which had included sharing

experiences, strategies and tools to leverage IP for women's empowerment. It also wished to thank WIPO for supporting the National Institute for the Defense of Competition and Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI) in the implementation of the project "Uchi creActivo: Sowing value through IP with the Awajun children of Urakusa", which aimed to promote the culture of communities in the Amazon region. The Delegation was grateful to all WIPO staff for their commitment, professionalism and collaborative spirit.

108. The Delegation of the Philippines said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and by the Delegation of Lao (People's Democratic Republic of) on behalf of the (ASEAN. Over the previous year, the Philippines had been developing a transformative, inclusive and collaborative IP system that was attuned to its stakeholders, while maintaining a global outlook and paying attention to local market conditions. The significant role of IP in boosting domestic production sectors was highlighted in the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028. A chapter on IP had been included in the Philippine Export Development Plan for the first time, highlighting the importance of IP to exported products and services, the value that IP adds to those products and the need to protect them in domestic and international markets. As IP was crucial to promoting and supporting innovation and creativity, the Philippines had enacted the Philippine Innovation Act and the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act. The Philippine Innovation Act would support the establishment of a dynamic innovation ecosystem, and established the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL) as a member of the National Innovation Council, chaired by the President of the country. IPOP HL remained committed to improving customer service and governance by becoming fully digital and streamlining processes to reduce both turnaround times and backlogs. The implementing rules and regulations, as well as examination guidelines, had been revised and updated to incorporate international best practices and lessons learned from the country's experience in patent prosecution. As IP was an effective tool for inclusive economic growth, incentive programs and capacity-building activities had been established for young people, MSMEs, women, indigenous communities and other underrepresented groups. The country continued to participate actively in global initiatives to empower women and increase their participation in the free market and the IP system. In addition, the Philippines had issued the Rules and Regulations on GIs, establishing a *sui generis* system of GI protection. Collaboration between partners was key to achieving an effective IP system. IPOP HL continued to work with key stakeholders, including international institutions, to increase IP creation and filings, and share knowledge. The Delegation was grateful for the support of WIPO during the country's chairing of the ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group. The country would continue to participate actively in the work of the IGC, which had a Vice-Chair from the Philippines, and in preparations for the 2024 Diplomatic Conference. It looked forward to reinforcing its partnership with WIPO and to IPOP HL becoming an authorized contributor to the WIPO ALERT database, which would complement efforts to address counterfeiting and piracy online. It was hoped that the Assemblies would provide an opportunity to move forward with the normative agenda, including on the Diplomatic Conference on the protection of broadcasting organizations.

109. The Delegation of Poland said that it aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. Poland condemned the illegal and unprovoked attack by the Russian Federation on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Its negative impact on the IP and innovation system of Ukraine could not be overstated. WIPO and its Member States must support efforts to rebuild Ukrainian IP infrastructure. Poland stood in solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Turning to other matters, Poland appreciated WIPO programmes on SMEs and innovators, as well as the Organization's efforts to increase the involvement of young people and women in innovation. Mindful of the crucial role played by creative women in driving robust economic growth, Poland, along with the other members of the CEBS Group, had organized an exhibition highlighting the

outstanding achievements of women designers. Poland recognized the significance of frontier technologies such as AI and was keen to continue exploring their use. It was imperative that WIPO continued to identify and monitor trends in that domain. Poland was grateful for the excellent work of the Regional and National Development Sector and its Division for Transition and Developed Countries, including its initiatives in Poland to promote IPRs in the country. It was also grateful to the WIPO Secretariat and the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the IGC for their invaluable participation in the IGC workshop of the CEBS Group.

110. The Delegation of Portugal said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and of Cabo Verde on the behalf of CPLP. Portugal reiterated its solidarity with Ukraine and supported the inclusion of item 21 in the agenda of the Assemblies. It welcomed the support provided by WIPO for the international conference on “Thinking about industrial property, sustainability and the future of the planet”, which had been held in Lisbon on May 29 and 30, 2023. The conference had provided an opportunity to discuss the role of the IP system as a vehicle for achieving the SDGs. WIPO played a central role in strengthening national IP systems. The aim of the MoU signed between the Organization and Portugal in 2022 was to boost training and awareness-raising for SMEs and young people, to publicize and promote the work done by women in the world of IP and to underline the importance of enforcing rights. Given the importance of protecting geographical indications and appellations of origin, it was essential to boost the Lisbon System. In the light of the adoption by the UN General Assembly in November 2022 of resolution 77/14 on cooperation between the UN and the CPLP, and the strong ties of cooperation that linked CPLP and WIPO, Portugal remained determined to strengthen the status of the Portuguese language, which was spoken by more than 278 million people around the world, with a view to it becoming a working language of the Organization.

111. The Delegation of Qatar said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group and of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. Qatar appreciated the spirit of cooperation and the growing partnership between WIPO and Qatar in many areas of IP, such as higher education, entrepreneurship and alternative dispute resolution. It looked forward to intensifying cooperation with regard to culture, the creative industries, museums and other areas that lay at the heart of the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030. WIPO had gone to considerable lengths to assist the country in monitoring the implementation of the national strategy to develop its system of IP institutions. Qatar had intensified work on its accession to several WIPO-administered treaties and Cabinet had approved accession to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks and the Convention Relating to the Distribution of Programme-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite (Brussels Convention). The Delegation supported ongoing negotiations in the various WIPO committees and looked forward to constructive engagement with Member States to ensure the success of the Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. With a view to extending the benefits of IP across the Arab region, Qatar backed proposals made by the Arab Group regarding the use of Arabic across the gamut of the Organization’s work and systems. The Delegation continued to support WIPO as the driving force for developing an effective and balanced international IP system that promoted innovation and creation and, thereby, fostered sustainable global development.

112. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea said that as innovation was a powerful tool in overcoming the economic crisis, WIPO and its Member States should strengthen their efforts to encourage innovation. Steps taken to create an innovation-friendly ecosystem in the country included expanding the use of AI technology. WIPO should prioritize the users of IP services, and discussions on external offices should therefore be accelerated. There had been an increase in IP financing for SMEs to promote IP use, with the 2022 expenditure of US\$ 6 billion

expected to reach US\$ 17 billion by 2027. There was also a one-stop-shop for IP infringement in order to ensure fair competition. As the second largest contributor among Member States, the Republic of Korea, through its Fund-In-Trust, supported various projects aimed at narrowing the IP gap and organized educational courses for young and female scientists from developing countries. It had also invited ten copyright offices to exchange views on their national strategies on infringement.

113. The Delegation of the Republic of Moldova said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. It strongly condemned the unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against the integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. The Republic of Moldova reiterated its full support for Ukraine and its solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In June 2022, the Republic of Moldova, together with Ukraine, had received European Union candidate status, and had since focused on preparing for the start of accession negotiations. The country's commitment in that regard had been reaffirmed in May 2023 with the adoption of the "European Moldova" Assembly Resolution. The alignment of national legislation with international standards was a priority and the support offered by WIPO in evaluating the draft amendments to legislation in the field of, *inter alia*, copyright and patents was highly appreciated. The Republic of Moldova had been invited to join the European Patent Convention, which would make it possible for the country to join the European patent space in the foreseeable future. The Delegation invited Member States to get to know the Republic of Moldova through its people, culture, heritage and traditional foods and clothing at a forthcoming CEBS Group event.

114. The Delegation of Romania said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states and of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group. With regard to the WIPO normative agenda, the preparatory work for the Diplomatic Conferences deserved the full attention of the Member States. Romania attached particular importance to the conclusion of a treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations and underlined its preference for an international legal instrument that was fully adapted to the realities of the digital era and responded to the present and future needs of those organizations. Romania noted the achievements outlined in the reports of the SCP; the SCT; the IGC; the SCCR; the IAOC and the PBC. It commended WIPO for putting on the public agenda respect for the proposed amendments to the Hague, Madrid and Lisbon Systems, which would promote the development of international registration systems and databases in the field of IP. Raising public awareness of IP was a priority for Romania. For World Intellectual Property Day 2023, the Government had organized a wide range of events throughout April and, in collaboration with the Romanian Television Society, had produced two videos celebrating Romanian women's creativity and innovation, one of which a number of major television stations continued to broadcast as a message of public interest. The Romanian Copyright Office (ORDA) and the Romanian Patent Office had co-organized, with WIPO, the fifth Regional Conference on Intellectual Property in the Digital Economy for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, on the topic of the film industry in the digital environment, held in Bucharest in January 2023. The conference had served as a platform for presenting new tools, trends and developments and promoting the strategic use of IP by SMEs and other stakeholders in the film industry. The fruitful cooperation and excellent support of the Division for Transition and Developed Countries was highly appreciated. Romania had underlined its desire to host a WIPO external office in Bucharest at every opportunity since its initial proposal to do so in 2010. The establishment of such an office would help to boost the development of the IP ecosystem and promote WIPO services in the region.

115. The Delegation of the Russian Federation said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of South Africa on behalf of BRICS and of Tajikistan on behalf of CACEEC. The IP system in the Russian Federation continued to function effectively and develop steadily in full compliance with the country's obligations under WIPO-administered treaties and those of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Legislative initiatives were being

carried out to transform the business climate and create a favorable IP ecosystem for the benefit of all users. A campaign was underway to promote national brands under the “Made in Russia” program. Applicants from the Russian Federation remained active users of IP services and, with its accession to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications, the country had become a full participant in all international registration systems. It stood ready to continue to contribute to their development and improvement. WIPO initiatives to promote the digital agenda and its policies on multilingualism and geographical representation were especially significant. The decision to hold the two Diplomatic Conferences in 2024 was welcome and it was to be hoped that their outcome would contribute to the development of the global IP system and the achievement of the SDGs. It was regrettable that certain delegations were undermining the effective functioning of the Organization and disrupting the work of its governing and negotiating bodies. The Program of Work and Budget of WIPO and its external offices should not be held hostage to the political ambitions of individual countries or be made an instrument of political pressure on the Secretariat and Member States. The Delegation was ready to work constructively with all interested Member States to ensure that the global IP system contributed to the comprehensive development of all countries and truly worked for the benefit of everyone. There was a need for active multilateral dialog in the spirit of healthy, multipolar, international cooperation, whereby the voices of all Member States should be heard and their interests taken into account.

116. The Delegation of Samoa said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It welcomed the support it had received from the Division for Asia and the Pacific of WIPO, in particular with the work of its national Branding Bureau. WIPO had also provided the country with assistance in relation to the PCT, including training for patent examiners, on the Madrid, Lisbon and Hague systems, and with regard to copyright matters. Development help had also been forthcoming in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with support for access to education in a safe and healthy IP ecosystem. The WIPO-backed IPAS was the backbone of the country’s IP Registry. The Delegation supported the extension of the mandate of the IGC for the 2024-2025 biennium with a view to achieving a favorable outcome on the matter of an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

117. The Delegation of Sao Tome and Principe aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and of Cabo Verde on behalf of CPLP. Although Sao Tome and Principe was a vulnerable island economy, it had worked with the assistance of WIPO, ARIPO and other bilateral and multilateral development partners to implement IP-related policies and harmonize the relevant regulations. That was borne out by the 90 per cent implementation rate of plans and activities under the country’s first national IP strategy for the period 2014-2018, as estimated by the international consultants who had supported the process. The country had put in place a secure legal and institutional framework and acceded to various multilateral instruments. Its second, four-year national strategy had been submitted to the Government for approval, and it was preparing to accede to the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration, the Kampala Protocol on Voluntary Registration of Copyright and Related Rights and the CPLP Protocol, and to adopt IPAS 4. The second national IP strategy took into account the fact that Sao Tome and Principe would be eligible for graduation from least developed country status in 2024 and provided for the implementation of projects that would support that process. With a view to raising awareness of the strategy and projects thereunder, the Delegation looked to WIPO for support in organizing an international conference on IP and sustainable development. The Delegation also welcomed the budget surplus achieved by the Organization in 2022.

118. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and commended the decision taken in 2022 to hold Diplomatic Conferences in 2024 to Conclude and Adopt a Design

Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. Saudi Arabia wished to play an active role in those conferences and reaffirmed its offer to host the Diplomatic Conference on a Design Law Treaty. It remained interested in opening a WIPO external office in the country with a view to fostering the IP environment there and in the wider region. In December of the previous year, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, had launched the national IP strategy with a view to building the country's IP system in order to foster an economy based on innovation and creativity. More than 38 public and private sector entities were involved in implementing the strategy in conjunction with other strategies on research and development and industry. With its accession to the Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms Against Unauthorized Duplication of Their Phonograms, Saudi Arabia had now ratified 13 IP-related treaties. The country attached great importance to the protection and enforcement of IPRs, the enhancement of the enforcement system and the blocking of websites that infringed IPRs. IP had been included in the country's education curriculums. Saudi Arabia looked forward to the broader use of Arabic language and the appointment in the country of an entity as an international search and international preliminary examining authority. The latter would help to enhance the country's involvement in IP-related matters. Delegates were invited to visit the Saudi pavilion on the country's history, which was being held on the margins of the Assemblies.

119. The Delegation of Serbia said that, in 2022 and with the support of WIPO, Serbia had launched a new national study on creating effective links between national IP strategies and the innovation ecosystem. Comprehensive analysis of the IP system had been carried out, with reference to the WIPO GII indicators. The study had provided the clearest picture to date of the Serbian IP system and its advantages and disadvantages, as well as the best guide on how to shape future IP-related goals. The study would provide the basis for the national IP strategy, which was being developed. Over the previous two years, the IP Office of Serbia had continued its productive cooperation with WIPO. World Intellectual Property Day 2022 had been dedicated to women's entrepreneurship, and had provided a valuable opportunity to meet creative and successful women. The IP Office was constantly expanding its connections with women's societies to understand their problems and needs in order to address their IP concerns. Moreover, in November 2022, for the first time, the IP Office and the Serbian Business Women's Society, together with WIPO, had awarded a medal to the female entrepreneur who had been most successful in the productive use of IPRs. In addition, a seminar, entitled "Leveling UP your IP: Strategies for Videogame Developers", had been organized in 2022 through the cooperation between WIPO and Serbian IP Office. The event had received positive feedback from stakeholders in the information technology industry and academics. Lastly, in early 2023, the translation and customization of the WIPO publication «Enterprising Ideas: A Guide to Intellectual Property for Startups» had been completed.

120. The Delegation of Sierra Leone said that a new impetus was needed to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global challenges that affected developing countries disproportionately. IP was a transformative tool that could help the country to rebuild its socio-economic infrastructure. An inclusive, accessible and balanced IP system was essential for promoting the generation, transfer and use of knowledge. Communities should be encouraged to make effective use of the IP system, including with regard to the protection of TK, TCEs and genetic resources. The focus of World Intellectual Property Day in 2023 had been the role of women in innovation and creativity. Women, by engaging in entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity, fostered technological advancement, enriched culture and contributed to economic growth. However, according to a report released by the UN in 2022, the exclusion of women from the digital world had contributed to a \$1 trillion shortfall in the gross domestic product of low and middle-income countries over the previous decade. Sierra Leone, under the leadership of President Julius Maada Bio, championed gender equality and women's

empowerment as a crucial part of efforts to attain sustainable peace and socio-economic development. WIPO and the ARIPO provided valuable support, guidance and assistance to the country in its efforts to develop its IP and innovation infrastructure, bridge the digital divide and achieve the SDGs. WIPO and its Member States should put mechanisms in place to facilitate technology transfer and build capacity, with a view to enhancing the national IP ecosystem and delivering impact-driven results in line with the country's DA in areas such as agriculture, health and renewable energy.

121. The Delegation of Singapore said that it aligned itself with the statements made by the Delegations of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and of Lao (People's Democratic Republic of) on behalf ASEAN. WIPO remained an important partner as Singapore worked to leverage IP and innovation to drive socio-economic development. Collaboration across WIPO sectors, as well as regional partnerships with the WIPO Singapore Office and the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, had produced tangible outcomes, including capacity-building and increased awareness of IP. Singapore looked forward to future work with those two entities on IP management, alternative dispute resolution and support for entrepreneurship. Building a credible valuation and reporting ecosystem for intangible assets and helping innovative enterprises to grow through IP remained core priorities for Singapore. It was to be hoped that WIPO would provide support in those areas. The IP Office of Singapore (IPOS) had produced a report revealing that the companies in Singapore with the most valuable brands and/or the largest patent portfolios had approximately double the revenue, net profit and market capitalization of companies without. Singapore had therefore launched initiatives, some alongside WIPO, to support SMEs and start-ups in their IP journey, which included mentorship, inventor assistance programs and the new IPOS Digital Hub e-service platform. The Delegation commended WIPO for its strong financial performance, which reflected the Organization's sound governance and financial management.

122. The Delegation of Slovakia said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group and of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. Efforts to build a well-balanced IP ecosystem for small and SMEs, raise awareness of IPRs among younger generations, increase the representation of women and explore the challenges accompanying AI and frontier technologies were welcome. Efforts to enhance the delivery of global services under the PCT, Madrid and Hague Systems by improving rules, guidelines and practices were equally welcome. The Delegation supported the adoption of the proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2024/2025 biennium and was looking forward to progress in the drafting of a treaty on the protection of broadcasting organizations. Constructive discussions had been held on the topic of TK and TCEs, and approval of the proposed mandate of work of the IGC for the 2024/2025 biennium would be welcome. Slovakia was engaged in the efforts the Working Group on the Development of the Lisbon System to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Special Union for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration (Lisbon Union). With regard to the Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8), the support of WIPO and other international organizations would be needed to rebuild in Ukraine. The Delegation looked forward to deepening its cooperation with WIPO, which had supported the holding of an international conference entitled "Why is mediation beneficial for innovative SMEs?" and the recent high-level event to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Slovak Innovation Ecosystem. Future cooperation in the areas of mediation and the provision of IP support to SMEs would be welcome. In addition to SMEs, research and development specialists and innovators relied heavily for assistance on the country's Industrial Property Office. The ongoing commitment of the Director General to foster the link between the financial and IP sectors was laudable. The Delegation would continue to work with WIPO to foster the international IP system, innovation and creativity as a means of stimulating economic, social and cultural development in all countries.

123. The Delegation of Slovenia said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Spain, on behalf of the European Union and its member states, and of Poland, on behalf of the CEBS Group. The Organization's continued focus on IP and frontier technologies, IP commercialization and intangible assets finance, and green and digital information was welcome. Encouraging SMEs, start-ups, women and young people to make use of IP rights was a priority for Slovenia and it gladly embraced the World IP Day campaign in 2023 to help to bridge the gender gap and highlight the importance of contributions by Slovenian women. It welcomed support from WIPO in the development of a comprehensive national IP strategy, through which it wished to increase the visibility of and respect for IP, foster a better understanding of IP and its use, facilitate the acquisition and protection of IP rights and contribute to the well-balanced development of innovation in a competitive economy. Slovenia was involved in other WIPO-backed projects, including its Training, Mentoring and Matchmaking Program on Intellectual Property for Women Entrepreneurs from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the CEBS region. In that context, a local representative was learning how to better leverage the benefits of IP in connection with a traditional local textile product, Idrija lace, to promote it as a geographical indication, and to network with other participants from the region and develop skills with the mentor's help. The country looked forward to hosting a WIPO delegation led by the Director General in September 2023. The visit would present an opportunity to enrich discussions and promote the benefits of IP among researchers, innovators, creators, entrepreneurs and high-level government representatives. Slovenia was committed to making progress towards the adoption of a meaningful broadcasting treaty.

124. The Delegation of South Africa said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. Efforts at WIPO to promote the use of IP, drive the WIPO DA and promote inclusivity and diversity were welcome. The Delegation fully supported efforts to promote women's participation in innovation and entrepreneurship and recognized the important role they played in IP-related fields. Work at WIPO on the theme of "IP and Youth: Investing in the Future" aligned with efforts in South Africa to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among young people. Although the Delegation was pleased to note the inclusion of TK and TCEs in the WIPO ecosystem, normative policies in those areas should be developed and a disclosure regime should be designed to support them. It was imperative that the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the processes of the IGC received financial support. The Delegation supported the new IGC mandate and the work of the Traditional Knowledge Division. Equitable regional and geographic representation in WIPO committees, including in the PBC and the WIPO Coordination Committee, was an important part of the WIPO reform process. In addition to promoting the protection and enforcement of IP, WIPO should focus on using the IP system to ensure equity, accessibility and benefit-sharing for all.

125. The Delegation of Spain, speaking in its national capacity, said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and by itself on behalf of the European Union and its member states. It hoped that the discussions held during the Assemblies would be productive and would enable the Member States to address the key topics under debate in the Organization's various committees and working groups, in which Spain had participated actively in the first half of 2023. The Delegation fully supported WIPO in its efforts to strengthen Member States' IP, innovation and creativity ecosystems and would continue to contribute to the Organization's proposals and programs to bring the benefits of IP to all members of society, especially SMEs. It welcomed the emphasis placed on gender equality and women inventors, creators and entrepreneurs in 2023, as well as the initiatives undertaken to promote diversity and inclusion both within and outside the Organization. It also welcomed the inclusion of data on women inventors for the first time in World Intellectual Property Indicators 2022. According to the data, while Spain had the highest proportion of female inventors in the world, the gender gap was still very pronounced in the area of innovation. Further efforts were necessary to promote the participation of women in the IPRs

system in order to develop a sustainable, competitive and inclusive economic model. The Delegation urged WIPO to continue raising awareness of the importance and relevance of IP and industrial property, making international protection systems increasingly attractive to users, especially those that faced the greatest barriers in accessing such systems, for example SMEs, the craft sector and individual creators. The Delegation appreciated the collaborative spirit of WIPO staff, in particular Director General, Mr. Daren Tang, and considered itself a staunch ally of the Organization. Its commitment to the governance of the Organization was strong and steadfast, as evidenced by its active participation in all committees and working groups. Within the SCP, Spain had worked tirelessly to improve the technical quality of patents. In cooperation with France, it had promoted research into the various facets of the relationship between AI and patents. It had also made progress in the study of substantive patent law in Brazil. Furthermore, it was supporting initiatives and activities to foster innovation in the field of health and medical technology. With respect to the SCT, it looked forward to the special session on the Design Law Treaty and stood ready to fully support and constructively engage in efforts to resolve outstanding issues on the draft texts. With respect to graphical user interfaces, it supported the remarks of the European Union regarding the importance of adopting recommendations on designs of that nature to facilitate the safeguarding of designers' rights in rapidly evolving fields of technology. With respect to geographical indications, Spain was following with interest the opening-up of the debate to geographical indications for services and craft and industrial products, which it considered a matter of particular importance, and the regulation of which was improving, for example at the European Union level. Furthermore, it strongly supported the work of the SCCR and fervently hoped that participants could reach consensus on the convening of a diplomatic conference in the near future for the adoption of a broadcasting treaty that reflected the technological developments made in the twenty-first century. It considered both copyright in the digital environment and the right to participation or "*droit de suite*" highly relevant issues that should be included in the Committee's standing agenda. In addition, it was fundamental to continue efforts to strengthen the work of the ACE to combat infringements of IP and industrial property online. Spain lauded the Organization's support and assistance for Ukraine based on the agreement reached at the previous Assemblies and wished to reiterate its solidarity with Ukraine and its citizens. Lastly, the Delegation remained committed to engaging in the work of WIPO as the primary platform for effective and purposeful multilateralism in the field of IP.

126. The Delegation of Sri Lanka said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. Sri Lanka was working closely with WIPO to strengthen its IP ecosystem. The WIPO TISC project had been launched in 2013, and the Enabling the IP Environment Project had been concluded. It would be appreciated if a follow-up project on IP in tourism could be launched in Sri Lanka to support the tourism industry. WIPO had provided Sri Lankan stakeholders with training on copyright and a WIPO copyright publication had been translated into a national language. Upcoming projects supported by WIPO included the launch of a mentorship program on women in IP, and a project to digitalize documents with the aim of upgrading the country's IP system. Sri Lanka also worked with the WIPO IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector on a project to support small businesses to use the IP system effectively, and received WIPO technical support to formulate a national IP strategy. It was hoped that Sri Lanka would be able to accede to the Madrid Protocol; the assistance of the Madrid System in finalizing compatible draft legislation for Sri Lanka to that end had been much appreciated. New legislation on registering geographical indications would enhance protection for Ceylon Tea, Ceylon Cinnamon and Ceylon Gems, which were unique to Sri Lanka. Lastly, the Delegation reiterated the importance of implementing the WIPO DA recommendations, and aligned itself with the call for financing to enable Indigenous Peoples and local communities to participate in the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

127. The Delegation of the Sudan said that the country found itself embroiled in an exceedingly complex situation, owing to the rebellion by the Rapid Support Forces, which had begun on April 15, 2023, their attempt to take power, their violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and the systematic destruction of State strategic and service facilities, especially those directly concerned by the work of WIPO. The Sudan attached great importance to the promotion and protection of IP, given the role it could play, through the use of IP strategies, in developing the Sudanese economy, protecting national goods, making its farm products and handicrafts more competitive and boosting revenue generated by trade in them. The Sudan was striving to build the capacity of its IP institutions, including universities and research centers. It was in the process of establishing, with the assistance of the WIPO Academy, a national IP training center and had begun, with WIPO support, to develop a comprehensive national IP strategy. All the relevant ministries and national institutions were involved in that effort. Despite the current circumstances, the Sudan had just signed a service level agreement with WIPO to establish TISCs, with a view to encouraging universities to benefit from them. The Sudan appreciated the work being done by WIPO to achieve the SDGs and its readiness to respond to the challenges facing developing and conflict-affected States. The Delegation was committed to the implementation of joint projects already under way and looked forward to assistance and support from WIPO in rebuilding its innovation and creativity sector, which had been greatly affected by the ongoing conflict in the Sudan.

128. The Delegation of Sweden said that it fully supported the statements delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and by the Delegation of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its member states. Sweden wished to reiterate its concern about the decision to move the Assemblies from the autumn to the summer and the difficulties that it created for delegations. It appreciated the efforts made by WIPO to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by promoting a strong, balanced and effective IP system that encouraged innovation and creativity. Sweden set great store by gender equality and inclusiveness and encouraged WIPO and its Member States to continue carrying out activities focused on women inventors and innovators. It was particularly pleased to note that World Intellectual Property Day 2023 celebrated the role of women in IP. The Delegation looked forward to continuing its cooperation with WIPO and helping to develop the international IP system for the economic, social and cultural development of all.

129. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking in its national capacity, said that it endorsed the statement delivered on behalf of Group B. Switzerland welcomed the Secretariat's report on assistance and support for the innovation and creativity sector and IP system of Ukraine. Noting that technical assistance was one of the core activities of WIPO, Switzerland, as the Organization's host country, supported the Secretariat's efforts to overcome the challenges alluded to in the report over the short, medium and long term. Turning to other matters, the smooth operation and attractiveness of all WIPO registration systems in the eyes of their users was a key priority for Switzerland. The Government looked forward to continuing discussions on AI both within the SCP and as part of the WIPO Conversation on Intellectual Property and Artificial Intelligence. Those discussions were vital to improve understanding of the challenges posed by emerging technologies in the registration of titles of protection. Against that backdrop, Switzerland wished to congratulate WIPO on the excellent performance of the PCT and Madrid Systems in 2022, in spite of precarious global economic conditions. On the other hand, the lack of resources for the Lisbon registration system and its implications for the performance of that System were concerning. The large number of accessions to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications in 2023 demonstrated the attractiveness of geographical indications, particularly for developing countries. Therefore, the Lisbon registration system must have sufficient human and financial resources to function properly and meet the needs of the new contracting parties. Lastly, it should be borne in mind that normative work was central among the Organization's mandate. In 2024, WIPO was due to hold two diplomatic conferences: one to conclude an international Legal Instrument relating to

Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources, and the other to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty. Although Switzerland did not call for those conferences, it was engaged in the discussions on their preparation and hoped to be able to contribute to realistic solutions in those important areas.

130. The Delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic said that it appreciated the work of the Division for Arab Countries, which had continued to monitor projects and programs under way in the country. The Delegation was convinced of the contribution that IP and innovation policies could make to its development and economic growth. That was particularly the case in view of the difficulties the country had experienced, including the recent catastrophic earthquake that had hit the region, and the adverse consequences of unilateral coercive measures, which affected the lives of millions of Syrians. The situation had demanded of the country a major effort to bolster knowledge and expertise, build capacity, develop IP infrastructure, support SMEs, and to put in place mechanisms updating the system of commercial and industrial rights and facilitating access to them. In the previous year, the first phase of the project to draft a national IP strategy had been completed in cooperation with WIPO. The next edition of the Basil Creativity and Inventions Exhibition would be held in Damascus in the coming months. Its aim was to raise awareness of how fostering innovation and creativity could contribute to sustainable development. Updated national guidelines for SMEs were being prepared and the Government was working with WIPO to monitor implementation of projects to establish a TISC and national IP training center. The Delegation was convinced that IP and innovation had a clear role to play in boosting the economy and development and in stimulating scientific progress, and therefore in their impact on people and society, in particular in developing countries. The country was anticipating further cooperation, enhanced capacity-building and support for innovation through the entrepreneurship project for Syrian women and support for small business and startups. The Delegation supported the proposal made by the Arab Group to include Arabic as an official language for WIPO publications.

131. The Delegation of Tajikistan, commending efforts of WIPO to strengthen the international IP system and promote innovation, creativity and sustainable development, said that the country was celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its national IP system. Significant results had been achieved in the recent past. A fully-fledged IP system had been built and was in operation. Policy on the use and legal protection of IP is embodied primarily in regulations governing innovation processes, which are based on provisions of the Constitution and of specific IP laws. Legislation has been enacted on the creation, legal protection and use of inventions, industrial designs, trademarks, geographical indications, copyright assets and new plant varieties. Guided by the prudent policies of the country's President, IP had acquired increasing importance. New strategic goals for the development of IP had been set for the period up to 2030. International cooperation had a key role to play in the development of the national IP system, and Tajikistan was now a party to 23 multilateral international IP treaties and a number of bilateral intergovernmental and interagency agreements. The Government was focusing on efforts to support and motivate inventors and young innovators, and competitions and other events were conducted to that end. A total of 21 winners of competitions, which took place every two years, had been awarded WIPO gold medals. Moreover, activities designed to boost inventive and patent activity were organized on regularly. Experts tour the country giving lectures and conducting seminars, and appear on television shows to awaken public interest in creative activities and to deepen their awareness of IP. New digital services and information systems are being developed to boost patent activity and enhance transparency. Efforts are also being made to explore new approaches, such as by the potential of AI and distributed databases. Key areas to be developed, such as innovation, the marketing and protection of IP rights, digitalization, the dissemination of IP knowledge, the stimulation of creativity, and education of children and young people, are set forth in the national IP strategy. The National Council for the Coordination and Development of IP, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, had been set up to guide action on those strategic pillars. The Council had been tasked with

formulating policies and strategies to promote IP, coordinating interagency cooperation on efforts to enforce IP rights, combat infringements thereof and update the related legislation.

132. The Delegation of Thailand said that the creative economy would be key to moving the country forward, as well as being one of the most important pillars of national strategy. Thailand aimed to become a value-based economy by utilizing creativity, technology, innovation and IP, and the Department of Intellectual Property was crucial in that regard. As the volume of online and digital transactions had increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department had created a smart IP initiative focused on leveraging the strength of the digital ecosystem to deliver customer services. There had been changes to IP registration processes, resulting in a new amendment to the Patent Act that aimed to make processes more efficient and streamlined. There were also additional provisions to enable Thailand to accede to the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs. The Delegation supported the continued negotiations on the protection of GRs, TK and TCEs that balanced the rights of owners and users; it was hoped that those negotiations would be concluded in the near future. Lastly, the Delegation acknowledged the role of the WIPO Academy in helping to enhance the ASEAN IP Academy.

133. The Delegation of Timor-Leste said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Cabo Verde on behalf of CPLP, of Lao (People's Democratic Republic) on behalf of ASEAN and of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. WIPO had provided Timor-Leste with significant support, in particular legal and technical assistance for the development of the country's Industrial Property Code, the establishment of its national IP office and the drafting of its recently enacted Copyright Act. With some 40 per cent of the country's population under the age of 15, Timor-Leste recognized the importance of IP for socio-economic growth, economic diversification and development. It needed to develop its IP regime, lay the foundations for its national IP strategy and address gaps in IP knowledge and capacity. The Delegation looked forward to broader cooperation with WIPO and welcomed the progress made in negotiations on normative matters in all WIPO committees.

134. The Delegation of Togo said that IP was a driver of growth that contributed to the development of States and the well-being of society. The Government roadmap for 2020–2025 therefore included the development of agricultural growth poles and industrial parks, the first of which were now in operation. Those initiatives would be underpinned by high-quality infrastructure and an adequate IP system. The support provided by the WIPO Secretariat with regard to geographical indications was greatly appreciated and had enabled the Government of Togo to carry out several activities in relation to the registration procedure for Kovié rice, which was produced mainly in Zio River basin in the country's Maritime region. The Government of Togo was confident that the product's value would increase quickly, which would be to the benefit of the people of Togo. Togo was rich in genetic resources, TK and folklore and required assistance to enhance their value. Development, including the need for technology transfer, were key concerns. The Government was therefore due to begin updating its requirements and defining its priorities with regard to technology transfer.

135. The Delegation of Trinidad and Tobago said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) on behalf of GRULAC. To mark World Intellectual Property Day in 2023, Trinidad and Tobago had held its first "appropriate technology" competition in collaboration with WIPO, the Korean Intellectual Property Office and the University of the West Indies. The competition had afforded an opportunity to reward excellence for innovative solutions and to promote the use of patent information. Of the nine finalists, five had been women, including the first and second-place winners, thus demonstrating women's invaluable contribution to innovation. Of two women inventors commemorated in the Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office Inventors' Hall of Fame, one had been featured by the WIPO Madrid Division as an emerging entrepreneur. The National Intellectual Property Training Centre had conducted more than 500 clinics,

70 per cent of which had been attended by female entrepreneurs. Trinidad and Tobago appreciated the support of WIPO and the Government looked forward to continued partnership to promote IP in the Caribbean region. The Digital Innovations for Sustainable Environmental and Economic Recovery in Trinidad and Tobago project was under way. Its aim was to strengthen the IP ecosystem and thereby support SMEs by establishing valuation guidelines for IP assets and developing mission-oriented policies for digital innovation. A new IP course for creative industries was being devised. The Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office had customized the WIPO IP Diagnostic Tool to help SMEs successfully utilize their IP and had concluded an IPAS automation agreement with WIPO; 70 per cent of IP filings were done online through WIPO FILE. In March 2023, cooperation had been broadened with a study mission to Chile to share experiences and best practices. Memorandums of understanding were due to be completed with Canada and the EUIPO. The Trinidad and Tobago Intellectual Property Office was also in the process of concluding an MoU with WIPO on the establishment of TISCs.

136. The Delegation of Tunisia said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group and the statement delivered by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group. IP was increasingly important in Tunisia, given its impact on the country's economic, social and cultural development. The Delegation stated that its Government had spared no effort in adapting domestic regulations and procedures to meet the highest international standards and in acceding to international conventions and treaties. The new Constitution, adopted on 25 July 2022, included a provision, in Article 29, guaranteeing IP. Tunisia had acceded to 19 WIPO-administered international treaties. The Delegation highlighted that its Government had an excellent relationship with WIPO, and had benefitted from ambitious and structured assistance, including for: drafting a national IP strategy; creating innovation clubs for young Tunisians; establishing, in the context of the work of the CDIP, a pilot project for increasing the competitiveness of business by reducing work-related accidents and illness; and modernizing the Tunisian IP Academy.

137. The Delegation of Türkiye, noting the Organization's efforts to ensure good global IP governance, said that the Government had taken decisive steps to strengthen its national IP system. Türkiye was among the most active users of the PCT and the Madrid and Hague Systems, and a leader in terms of participation in IP activities by women: it had ranked among the top 20 countries in 2022 for the highest proportion of PCT applications made by women inventors. Turkish IP authorities, such as the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office (TÜRKPATENT) and DG Copyright, had launched various initiatives for key stakeholders. The country was striving to integrate digital technology and automation into more user-friendly platforms for seamless IP registration and management. It had benefited from the expertise of the WIPO Academy through participation in the latter's master's program in IP and further development of the Turkish IP Academy, with training of trainers and other skills-based programs. While aligning itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, the Delegation emphasized that the work of technical and specialized committees should be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. Delegates were invited to visit the Turkish exhibition entitled "Harvesting hope: empowering earthquake-affected provinces through geographical indications".

138. The Delegation of Uganda said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation acknowledged the Director General's report and appreciated the milestones achieved. Uganda had held a national IP week, implemented the Appropriate Technology Project for Uganda and the TISC program, and carried out activities to promote the geographical indication system. The country continued to participate in the negotiations of the IGC and would engage in the Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.

139. The Delegation of Ukraine said that the country's commitment to upholding international IP standards and protecting vulnerable groups had been underlined by its recent accession to the Marrakesh Treaty. Ukraine had adopted legislation on copyright and related rights that made it possible to adapt to evolving technologies and challenges faced by creators. As a candidate country for membership of the European Union, it had introduced laws to strengthen IPRs protection for national and foreign users in compliance with the Union's regulations. In the face of ongoing aggression by the Russian Federation and its deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, the foremost priority of Ukraine was to protect lives. The Government was also implementing vital programs to assist SMEs, businesses, creative industries and people affected by the war. The scale of the damage caused by the war was growing. The recent detonation of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant by the Russian Federation had unleashed the largest ecological and humanitarian disaster that Europe had faced in decades. The Russian Federation had deliberately damaged or destroyed more than 100,000 civilian infrastructure facilities and the estimated cost of reconstruction and recovery now stood at US\$411 billion. Ukraine welcomed support from WIPO and States members of Group B, the CEBS Group and the European Union, and from all like-minded countries and organizations. It also welcomed the Secretariat's Report on the Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8), and looked forward to continued partnership with WIPO and its Member States to rebuild and strengthen the country's IP sector. It was essential that global IP services be upheld, including with regard to the PCT. The Delegation supported the Organization's mission to lead the development of a balanced and effective global IP ecosystem.

140. The Delegation of the United Arab Emirates said that the country appreciated efforts by WIPO to reinvigorate its work and take it to new, competitive heights. It attached great importance to developing, with vision and sound guidance, a national environment conducive to IP, innovation and patent activities in line with the best global practices. As part of its long-term vision, the country had put in place a flexible system of laws to fully protect the IPRs of talented and skilled people, creators, innovators and entrepreneurs. That system comprised a series of Acts relating to the economy and the worldwide program of comprehensive economic partnership agreements. Moreover, the United Arab Emirates had acceded to a number of international conventions, including the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks. Under the impulse of that battery of activities, the country was drawing in talent, among other things through its national talent strategy, which would generate ten initiatives. The country had ranked first at the Arab and regional levels in the GII for 2023. It had launched its "We, the UAE 2031" vision, under which IP and innovation lay at the heart of the approach to the country's economic growth and sustainability. The aim of the vision was for the United Arab Emirates to become one of the top ten countries. The country remained committed to hosting a WIPO external office, in line with the request made by the PBC. The Delegation expressed the hope that a new roadmap to accelerate economic recovery through IP innovation would emerge from the current series of meetings of the Assemblies.

141. The Delegation of the United Kingdom said that the WIPO response to the extraordinary challenges of the previous years had been admirable and should provide lessons for the future. Collaboration was key to making IP opportunities available to all and WIPO efforts to be more inclusive were welcome. The focus on future technologies was commendable and work in that regard should continue, particularly through discussions on enforcement. It was to be hoped that the upcoming Diplomatic Conferences to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty and to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources would produce a consensus-based, well-balanced and workable outcome for all. The recent attack on an apartment building in L'viv was a reminder of the crucial role that WIPO played in supporting Ukraine and its innovation and creativity sector following the invasion by the Russian Federation.

142. The Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana, on behalf of the African Group. It commended the Director General for holding briefings and discussions with the heads of IP offices on the Proposed Program of Work and Budget 2024/25 and it was pleased to note the progress made on the draft International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and the Traditional Knowledge associated with them. The WIPO committees were to be commended for carrying out their programs and implementing the WIPO DA in line with the directives and mandate of the WIPO General Assembly. The United Republic of Tanzania continued to improve IP services and enforcement through IP protection, legal reforms, capacity-building, awareness-raising programs, workshops, seminars and media platforms. The country also continued to benefit from WIPO assistance in the implementation of strategic projects and the development of the national IP system. It was particularly grateful to WIPO for progress made in the following areas: upgrading the IPAS, the ARIPO Member States Module and the WIPO online platform; formulating the IP policy for Zanzibar; receiving technical advice to design a national IP policy; providing a distance-learning platform for students enrolling in the Master's Program for IP at the University of Dar es Salaam; implementing the joint training of trainers program; concluding an MoU between WIPO and the Tanzanian judiciary; introducing a national training program for young innovators and a program for women entrepreneurs; implementing the TISCs program; introducing the IP Diagnostic Tool; providing business support; and ensuring capacity-building through the WIPO Academy. The Delegation looked forward to receiving further WIPO assistance in order to carry out legal reforms.

143. The Delegation of the United States of America said that it was important to focus on sustainability to tackle climate change; discussions at the 16th IP5 Heads of Office meeting had focused on that issue. Half of the energy reductions needed to reach net zero emissions would come from technologies that had not yet been commercialized. The role that WIPO played in promoting IP protection throughout the world had therefore never been more important. As a WIPO GREEN partner, the United States of America wanted to reach a new generation of innovators, facilitate collaboration and accelerate investment in green technology, and it looked forward to working with WIPO to achieve those goals. With the vast majority of WIPO income generated by patent, trademark and industrial design application fees, it was important to ensure that all WIPO registration systems had achieved, or were working towards, financial self-sustainability. Doing so would ensure that clients received services and WIPO continued to operate. The Delegation supported the provision of WIPO assistance to maintain the Ukrainian IP system during the brutal and unjust war launched by the Russian Federation. The Report on Assistance and Support for Ukraine's Innovation and Creativity Sector and Intellectual Property System (document A/64/8) was appreciated and the Delegation looked forward to further discussions on that topic. Ukrainian innovators would play a critical role in rebuilding their country and advancing science, technology and industry.

144. The Delegation of Uruguay said that the country was a leader in digital growth in Latin America and combined institutional stability with a long-term strategic vision. The strategy was not only based on the country's existing strengths in logistical services, trade agreements and tax benefits, but also on the strengthening and expansion of existing conditions in IP. Momentum had been gained through a comprehensive and holistic vision to cover not only substantive regulatory conditions, which were undoubtedly important, but also some essential contributing factors, such as the existence of human capital. In that context, although the country had a pool of educated, flexible, creative and multilingual talent, there were still opportunities to raise awareness of IP. The country was continuing to back innovation and knowledge by seeking to become a technology hub through the Uruguay Innovation Hub initiative. That had brought investment from cutting-edge multinational research and development companies thanks to progress in the adoption of ICT and the advance and penetration of Internet connectivity, as well as an infrastructure and stable social, political and legal conditions that put it in an unbeatable position for making progress in innovation.

Moreover, the country was aware of the fundamental role of SMEs as a major part of its thriving entrepreneurial fabric and understood that improving the quality of development unquestionably required countries to adopt and intensively use the instruments of the IP system in order to benefit from incentives and thereby monetize Uruguayan talent and creativity. The Delegation hoped to continue to count on the invaluable collaboration of WIPO in all cases as it sought to create synergies in order to fulfil their mutual aspirations in IP promotion and development.

145. The Delegation of Uzbekistan said that the Government was working to develop the country's IP system, which had a crucial role to play in its socio-economic progress. A range of projects was being carried out, in part thanks to participation in IP development initiatives of WIPO. By way of example, the WIPO IP Diagnostics tool had been translated into Uzbek and there were plans to do the same with the WIPO IP guide for startups, *Enterprising Ideas*. The IP for Business Division of the IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector of WIPO had provided valuable assistance in that regard. A series of WIPO seminars had been held for judges. The Supreme Court had issued a plenary ruling regarding its involvement in the decision-making process for IP disputes. An expert meeting on "IP ecosystems and innovation" had been held as part of the Third International Forum. With regard to Internet piracy, Uzbekistan would join the WIPO ALERT initiative, which provided access to lists of offending sites around the world. The country was also preparing to join the WIPO Inventor Assistance Program (IAP) and the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC). Uzbekistan had recently launched a public IP e-services portal, which served as a hub offering round-the-clock registration services for all types of IP assets. It was also working to take part in the Patent Prosecution Highway program, with a view to further accelerating and rendering more efficient the processing of applications to register IP assets. Work was being done on the country's accession to various international treaties and to update national legislation in line with international IP standards. Uzbekistan was also reviewing and updating IP law in order to bring it into line with the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The Delegation was grateful to the Division for Transition and Developed Countries for its assistance in implementing joint projects and promoting IP development in Uzbekistan.

146. The Delegation of Vanuatu said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. Technical assistance provided by WIPO had enabled capacity-building and legislative reform on geographical indications, the establishment of a copyright management organization and the development of a copyright guide. Vanuatu would be hosting the Melanesian Arts Festival in July 2023 and the guide would serve to foster greater awareness of the legal rights and obligations involved in the marketing of copyrighted work. Vanuatu was developing a national IP strategic plan with a view to stimulating creativity and innovation. Innovation must be part of the response to such existential threats as climate change, rising sea levels and natural disasters. In that regard, Vanuatu would appreciate support from WIPO and its Member States as it partnered with the National University of Vanuatu and other academic and research institutions to develop IP components for their training modules.

147. The Delegation of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), speaking in its national capacity, said that it applauded the new approach of WIPO based on seeking to work harmoniously with the various political, economic and social models of developing countries. Its country, despite the major challenges relating to the imposition of more than 900 illegal, extortionate, unilateral coercive measures against its economy and people, had been working to build a multi-center and pluri-polar system that facilitated the inclusion of entrepreneurs in different markets by encouraging the protection of innovation through legal updates and administrative flexibility in IP. It ratified its commitment to the international community to make progress in the comprehensive protection of IP and traditional and ancestral knowledge on the basis of the guiding principles enshrined in the UN Charter. WIPO could rely on the country's Bolivarian Government and its people.

148. The Delegation of Viet Nam said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group and by the Delegation of Lao (People's Democratic Republic of) on behalf of ASEAN. A number of important IP-related instruments had been launched recently in Viet Nam, including a national IP strategy and a national IP development program, which would improve the legal and policy environment to help to enhance creativity and the IP ecosystem. Viet Nam had acceded to 15 WIPO-administered treaties, and had benefited from close cooperation and supervision from ASEAN and WIPO. Their timely and effective support had enabled many projects to be carried out successfully for the ecosystem of Viet Nam. The Delegation looked forward to deepening collaboration with WIPO and exploring ways to work with ASEAN member States in order to promote the use of IP in job creation, attract investment and develop the economy and society.

149. The Delegation of Yemen said that it aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Delegations of Algeria on behalf of the Arab Group and of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. It was grateful to WIPO for its unstinting work and efforts in cooperation with Member States. Since the 1970s, Yemen had enjoyed especially close relations with the Organization and it was committed to protecting IP and promoting innovation and creativity. The country was working actively with WIPO to protect the rights of authors and inventors, trademarks, designs, artistic performances and others. The technical and legal support that Yemen received from WIPO contributed greatly to the development of the country's IP legal system. The Delegation stressed the importance of continued cooperation to promote a culture of IP and to develop legal systems in order to promote innovation and creativity and achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

150. The Delegation of Zambia said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. It welcomed efforts by WIPO to promote the use of IP in Africa as a tool for creating jobs, attracting investment, growing businesses and developing the economy. Zambia would welcome assistance in raising awareness among key national stakeholders of the importance of IP for economic growth and national development. As part of ongoing efforts to ensure a balanced ecosystem for the protection and use of IP, the Government had recently approved new trademark law, which would strengthen the enforcement of measures to limit the inward flow of counterfeit trademark goods and which also provided for the protection of geographical indications. The Delegation was grateful for the assistance provided by WIPO in the drafting of that and other related legislation. It would strive for consensus on a range of issues pending before the Organization's committees. Ongoing cooperation with WIPO would be welcome in areas such as the integration of IP into the school curriculum, IP support for SMEs, capacity-building for collective management organizations, and the digitalization of the IP records system in Zambia.

151. The Delegation of Zimbabwe said that it aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. Under the country's national development strategy, IP and innovation would be key enablers for socio-economic development as the country pursued its goal of achieving middle-income status by 2030. The establishment of innovation hubs at State universities had spurred industrial modernization and seen the Government registering more than 500 patents in various fields. The country's improved ranking in the WIPO GII in 2022 was evidence of the improvement in its innovation and IP ecosystem. An autonomous deeds, companies and IP authority would be established as part of a process designed to enhance the efficiency of the country's IP ecosystem. Zimbabwe was working with WIPO to make the country's Intellectual Property Office database accessible online. WIPO had facilitated a workshop on access to technology for innovation and the development of TISCs in the country. The successful partnership with WIPO, ARIPO and the Government of Japan behind the Master's program in IP at the Mutare campus of the Africa University was ongoing. Zimbabwe strongly favored disclosure requirements and the protection of TK, TCEs and GRs, and it supported the convening of the two Diplomatic Conferences in 2024. It was prioritizing the implementation of the 45 WIPO DA recommendations and

welcomed the increased budgetary allocation for the Organization's development programs in the 2024-2025 biennium. Ongoing WIPO assistance with capacity-building across the African continent was welcome.

152. The Representative of OAPI reaffirmed OAPI's cooperation with WIPO, which had enabled the development, in 2023, of two important tools for IP actors in Member States: the IP self-assessment tool for SMEs wanting a preliminary view of how to utilize IP in their business; and the case law of legal decisions with regard to IP in the OAPI area, which would contribute to improving interpretation of the law and thereby strengthen its application in Member States. Lastly, in December 2022, OAPI had acceded to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications.

153. The Representative of ARIPO said that it appreciated the unwavering support provided to it by WIPO. In 2023, ARIPO and WIPO had worked together on several initiatives, including the Regional Conference on Intellectual Property for Women in Agribusiness, which had been held in Rwanda, a workshop on the IPAS Cloud functionality, the Regional Meeting for the Development of TISC Networks in the African Region, and PCT online training. Further aspects of collaboration had included alternative dispute resolution for IP and technology disputes, digital licensing and documentation for collective management organizations, and reproduction rights. ARIPO was also actively engaged in the Regional Intellectual Property School Club initiative. The second Heads of Intellectual Properties Offices Conference had been held recently in Rwanda. The initiative to transform the ARIPO Academy into a regional center of excellence for IP training was progressing well the ARIPO had recently renewed its MoU with Africa University and WIPO.

154. The Representative of the Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) expressed alarm about certain developments in the global IP system and said that the practice of imposing unilateral sanctions and other illegitimate measures on IP applicants, rights holders and patent attorneys from the Russian Federation and Belarus, and discrimination against them, were ongoing. They were being denied proper access to IP services, in violation of international obligations. The European Commission regularly adopted regulations in that regard. Not content with the illegal "freezing" of applications, in more recent sanctions packages it had simply stripped applicants from the Russian Federation of any right to legal assistance. The United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office refused *a priori* to provide IP services to sanctioned persons. The Ukrainian Intellectual Property Office automatically issued refusals based only on applicants' citizenship. The current situation threatened to undermine the normal functioning of the global IP system: in no legal instrument was there any provision for the so-called freezing of IP applications. The uncertainty surrounding the legal status of "frozen" applications would leave a good deal of technical solutions in a gray zone, which in turn would impinge on the quality of granted patents owing to gaps in information on the prior art. It would affect not only users from the Russian Federation and Belarusians, but also all users of the IP system and IP professionals without exception. Political bias in some organizations had already prevented applicants from using the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) program owing to a freeze on interagency cooperation, in spite of the high demand for that service, in particular among European applicants. Nonetheless, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, which were subject to near constant attacks in virtually every WIPO committee, continued to fulfill their obligations to applicants and rights holders of all countries. The rhetoric of many delegates was focused on political issues that were of scant interest to the vast majority of the Organization's Member States. Rather, the development of the IP system, strategies for updating legislation, digitalization, and skills enhancement were issues of concern to all. There was a need to return to constructive, meaningful, multilateral dialog for the benefit of all Member States, users and the global creative community.

155. The Representative of the League of Arab States (LAS) lauded the fruitful and constructive cooperation that had marked the LAS' relations with WIPO since they had signed

an MoU in 2000. A network of TISCs had been launched in the Arab region. In line with the wishes of WIPO, the Secretary-General of the League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, had agreed that the network be set up under the auspices of the League, thereby underlining the latter's conviction regarding the importance of innovation and IP. The League continued to work closely with the WIPO Division for Arab Countries on a number of projects, activities and meetings with other regional groups. A highlight had been the third session of the Asian-Arab IP Dialogue between Japan and selected Arab States, which had been held in February 2023, with the Japan Patent Office attending at the LAS' headquarters in Cairo. The LAS had decided that the Syrian Arab Republic should return to its seat at LAS and again take part in its activities. The return of that country to active participation in IP matters was equally welcome.

156. The Representative of the Secretariat of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC Patent Office) said that WIPO, through its tools and normative instruments, played a key role that should be exercised with a view to achieving the fair and equitable exploitation of IPRs and the unrestricted operation of flexibilities and exceptions provided for under the various international conventions, especially in the area of public health. The Gulf States wished to see an environment that generated IP, fostered respect for IPRs and enabled their enforcement, and allowed IP to make a real contribution at the international level. That ambition was illustrated by the proposal to appoint the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP) as an International Searching Authority (ISA) and International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA) under the PCT; the ongoing modernization in the Gulf States of systems, laws and procedural processes relating to different categories of IP; and capacity-building for stakeholders, including judges and enforcement officials. That had led to further progress in many international indicators. The Organization should continue to play an increasing role in establishing a balanced and effective international IP system that was responsive to countries' different levels of development.

157. The Representative of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said that WIPO was essential to advancing an effective and balanced global IP ecosystem for the benefit of all. It had made outstanding efforts to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States, particularly developing and least developed countries. WIPO played a unique role in facilitating technology transfers to developing countries, which helped to boost their productivity and accelerate their economic, social and cultural development. OIC congratulated WIPO for the launch of the GII 2022 and was pleased to note the significant progress of several OIC member countries. OIC remained committed to implementing the relevant provisions of the OIC Science, Technology and Innovation Agenda 2026, the Abu Dhabi Declaration of the Second OIC Summit on Science and Technology, and the relevant resolutions adopted by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. They provided a framework to strengthen cooperation and foster innovation and creativity among OIC member countries. They also promoted scientific and technological development, and expedited the transition to knowledge societies. OIC was grateful for the support that the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had provided to OIC member countries to develop science, technology and innovation, and to promote joint Islamic action in those areas.

158. The Representative of the South Centre (CS) said that the anticipated adoption in 2024 of an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources, which would protect against the misappropriation of such resources and knowledge, notably through an obligation to disclose their origin, would align the work of WIPO with the developmental needs of the global South. A disclosure requirement in IP applications constituted an important transparency measure that would improve the global IP system's consistency with international obligations on access and benefit-sharing. Member States should approve the requisite budgetary allocation to allow for the participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in all informal and formal processes related to the instrument. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the urgent need

for technology transfer and timely access to medical technologies; the system in place for IP and public health had proven inequitable for developing countries. The CS continued to support national policy-makers, patent offices and judicial and regulatory authorities on the full use of the flexibilities provided by the TRIPS Agreement for public health, with bespoke technical assistance for developing countries. The CS would host a side event during the current series of meetings of the Assemblies, entitled “Good patent examination leads to access to medicines”. The CS welcomed the approval of the work program on limitations and exceptions by the SCCR, and supported the recent communication by GRULAC on a fair remuneration for authors and creators in the digital environment. It also welcomed the forthcoming study on how new business models, such as streaming platforms, affected revenues for creators. The WIPO General Assembly should give clear direction to the SCCR to achieve a balanced copyright system that promoted a robust public domain and supported education, research, preservation and creativity. While acknowledging the high importance of emerging digital issues related to IP, including AI and data governance, the CS remained concerned about the IP and Frontier Technologies Division’s lack of accountability to Member States. Activities in that domain would benefit from being more closely aligned with the recommendations made in the WIPODA.

159. The Representative of the Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) said that the CCFN was grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly. Small and medium-sized farmers, producers and exporters and their customers from developed and developing countries around the world relied on common names. Unfortunately, the aggressive campaign of the European Union to prohibit the use of common names through illegitimate geographical indications was affecting their rights. That campaign also ignored hundreds of years of European colonialism, expansionist immigration policies and global cultural integration. While geographical indications from developing countries were legitimate, the actions of the European Union undermined the goodwill that they should enjoy and threatened the IP system itself. WIPO should right that wrong by making the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications and all related programs self-funding, paid for in full by their members. In addition, WIPO must deal equitably with common names, including by establishing an independent office with the budget and staff necessary to carry out common name education and research activities and advocating for their fair treatment. It must also treat common names equitably in all programs, processes, activities and policies. CCFN stood ready to collaborate to ensure that WIPO was consistent, fair, transparent and objective in its treatment of common names.

160. The Representative of the Intellectual Property Latin American School (ELAPI) said that, since the previous session of the Assemblies, ELAPI had strengthened its internal structure through the creation of an academic directorate and an international office based in Washington D.C. Through its gender directorate, it continued to work towards ensuring equality within the school and closing the gender gap. ELAPI had actively participated in many meetings at WIPO and in meetings with Member States to represent newcomers to IP in Latin America.

161. The Representative of the International Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (AIPPI) said that AIPPI was one of the world’s leading non-profit associations dedicated to harmonizing and strengthening IP protection laws. It was politically neutral and had over 8,000 members from more than 110 countries. AIPPI was a user organization gathering the views of businesses of all sizes. AIPPI focused on the essential role of IP in protecting research and development investments and investments in creativity, which would not be made if the resulting valuable intellectual property could not be protected. The success of WIPO was based on the Organization being at the forefront of international harmonization. AIPPI would continue to work with WIPO to develop IP protection laws so as to safeguard research and development investments and reward creativity by ensuring that account was taken of the views of IP users.

162. The Representative of the International Intellectual Property Commercialization Council (IIPCC) said that IP remained a driver of progress and economic growth for every society. Development strategies could only succeed with the promotion of innovation and invention, rooted in respect for IP. Since its creation in 2014, IIPCC had collaborated with WIPO and other partners to promote the commercialization of IP, with emphasis on the protection of trade secrets through its International Knowledge Registry. IIPCC proposed that a binding international framework should be developed for protecting trade secrets, which would not only promote the commercialization of Africa's extremely rich TK but would also secure the hard-earned ancestral knowledge that was transmitted from generation to generation.

163. The Representative of Knowledge Ecology International (KEI) said that during a public health emergency, no company should have a monopoly over inventions, data, biological resources or manufacturing knowledge required for countermeasures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the most common non-voluntary licenses to use patented inventions had involved exceptions to Article 44(2) of the TRIPS Agreement to eliminate the availability of injunctions. WIPO should hold a workshop on the use of that often-ignored exception. The innovations system should be more transparent with a view to making actors more accountable and to strengthening public trust. WIPO should avoid text-based negotiations that were off the record. Given the confusion over its objectives, work on a treaty to protect broadcasters should be paused. Broadcasters should not be given perpetual rights to content that they did not create, own or license.

164. The Representative of the Latin American Audiovisual Authors Societies Federation (FESAAL) said that the societies that FESAAL represented and European societies exercised the right to remuneration in collective management. The right provided additional compensation for screenwriters and directors who had ceded their copyright or who had been commissioned by a producer. The additional compensation was generated when the audiovisual work was disseminated and did not affect the IP that had been assigned to the producer. The evolution of the Internet and over-the-top platforms had benefited copyright, provided that creators received additional compensation, and the right to remuneration for directors and screenwriters had proven to be a solution. The issue should remain on the WIPO agenda and, given the interest of various governments, FESAAL was willing to provide the necessary data to analyze the effectiveness of the right to remuneration in the territories where it applied.

165. The Representative of *Maloca Internationale* said a decision had been taken at the previous Assemblies to convene a Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources. To the Representative's knowledge, no representatives of indigenous peoples had been present when that decision had been taken, which ran counter to international law insofar as indigenous peoples must be consulted in decision-making processes that were liable to affect them. At the current Assemblies, discussions were due to be held on at least two items concerning indigenous peoples. First, according to the report of the PBC, no consensus had been reached on using the Organization's regular budget to support the presence of indigenous delegates during the next biennium, which included the aforementioned diplomatic conference. Second, action was due to be taken on the report of the IGC, TK and Folklore. The Representative hoped that the decisions taken at the current Assemblies would pave the way for the effective participation of indigenous peoples and provide for their free, prior and informed consent on decisions that might affect their rights. Immediately following the WIPO Assemblies, she would be attending the 16th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the Palais des Nations. *Maloca Internationale* would be relating the discussions and decisions of the Assemblies to the Expert Mechanism, whose secretariat had recently attended an event on the effective participation of indigenous peoples held at WIPO.

166. The Representative of the Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (ORIGIN) said that the Lisbon System benefited small producers and SMEs alike, and had generated great interest among WIPO Member States, including developing countries. The long-standing principle of financial solidarity among WIPO unions and budget programs should continue to apply to the Lisbon System. Proposals circulating within WIPO on raising the international profile of “genericity” beyond the level of case-by-case exceptions to internationally recognized IPRs were dangerous, as they could undermine the basic principles of the entire IPRs system.

167. The Representative of the All-China Patent Agents Association (ACPAA) said that it had learned that WIPO had launched a cloud strategy. It was concerned about the sensitive and confidential information of users of WIPO IP services being hosted in a public cloud environment provided by commercial and private enterprises. As a permanent Observer of WIPO, ACPAA, together with the CCPIT and the PPAC, had drafted a position paper on data security. It was hoped that WIPO would pay attention to user concerns about data security and continue to strengthen its own data supervision to properly manage and protect user information while implementing its cloud strategy. ACPAA called on WIPO to continue to optimize and improve the global IP service, introduce Chinese to the Madrid System and the Hague System, and provide more convenient services for Chinese users.

168. The Representative of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) said that 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of China’s cooperation with WIPO. As the largest agency for promoting foreign trade and investment in China, CCPIT had a long history of cooperation with WIPO. In 1973, CCPIT had sent its first delegation to a meeting of WIPO governing bodies, marking the beginning of China’s cooperation with WIPO, and had been granted permanent observer status in 2017. CCPIT appreciated WIPO’s efforts to empower young people, women and SMEs through IP, leading the development of a balanced IP ecosystem, and accelerating innovation and creativity. During his recent visit to China, the Director General, together with the Chair of the CCPIT, had held a discussion with women innovators and entrepreneurs, which had received positive feedback. CCPIT hoped that WIPO would further optimize and improve global IP service systems by introducing Chinese as a working language in the Madrid and Hague Systems, to provide more convenient and efficient services to users. Noting that WIPO had launched its cloud-first strategy in 2018, CCPIT hoped that measures would be taken to guarantee data security and protect the interests of users of global IP services. CCPIT stood ready to strengthen exchanges with WIPO and strengthen communication between WIPO and Chinese users.

169. The Representative of the China Trademark Association (CTA) said that CTA had been established as a national organization for trademark agencies and a professional trademark organization. It had participated in the work of WIPO since obtaining observer status to the SCT in 2005, and had become a permanent observer to WIPO in July 2022. To improve the international operation of Chinese brands and the level of protection of the Madrid international registration of trademarks, CTA had set up a Madrid Working Committee and studied the requirements of Chinese enterprises in respect of the Madrid international registration of trademarks. CTA therefore strongly supported the proposed introduction of Chinese as a working language of the Madrid System, which would be to the benefit of more market entities and individuals.

170. The Representative of *Corporación Latinoamericana de Investigación de la Propiedad Intelectual para el Desarrollo (Corporación Innovarte)* said that *Corporación Innovarte* was a Latin American non-governmental organization that advised on IP for development. The success of the Marrakesh Treaty demonstrated the importance of reaching agreements to guarantee rights for users of IP subject matter. The spirit of the Marrakesh Treaty should be leveraged in order to better protect access to health, education, research and preservation. WIPO was urged to protect artists and other creators who continued to be unable to enjoy the

benefits of IP fairly, particularly because of the practices of global digital platforms and other intermediaries. Balance was essential to promoting innovation and creativity that was in line with the human right to participate in culture and science. *Corporación Innovarte* stood ready to collaborate constructively with Member States and the WIPO Secretariat.

171. The Representative of the Egyptian Council for Innovation and Creativity and Intellectual Property Protection (ECCIPP) said that it was concentrating its efforts on young and woman innovators, the spreading of awareness and a culture of IP in government schools in Egypt, and the launch of festivals to support and encourage women. The Regional Woman Innovators Festival was held annually. The Council worked with a range of governmental bodies in Egypt, along with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of the Environment. It also ran training sessions in various Arab countries, sat on juries at many exhibitions worldwide and was working with the Ministry of the Environment on a national women's green initiative.

172. The Representative of the Emirates Intellectual Property Association (EIPA) said that the Association's vision was for the United Arab Emirates to be in the vanguard of IP protection. To that end, it was focusing its efforts on raising community and institutional awareness of the concept of IP protection and its related applications and regulations, and on fostering a culture of respect for IP. The Association was partnering with the public and private sectors to assist SMEs in investing in IP. It was also currently working with WIPO and the International IP Crime Investigators College of INTERPOL to roll out a training program to build law enforcement capacity among the country's police officers.

173. The Representative of the German Association for the Protection of Intellectual Property (GRUR) said that GRUR had been founded in 1891 for the academic advancement and development of industrial property and copyright law at the German, European and international levels. GRUR was a neutral, non-profit association with approximately 5,000 members from professional groups and organizations active in the field of IP law, including law professors, judges, civil servants, lawyers, patent attorneys and representatives of associations and companies. GRUR had closely followed WIPO activities over the years and was grateful to the Organization for tirelessly safeguarding and developing the IPRs system through the administration of the PCT and the Madrid and Hague Systems. Recognizing the criticality of all forms of IPRs in promoting economic development, industrial expansion and technological innovation, GRUR supported the Organization's efforts to administer, update and continuously enhance those treaties and systems, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders and emerging threats to IP protection. GRUR welcomed the measures taken by WIPO to explain the benefits of those protection systems to non-members, thereby significantly expanding their geographical coverage. It encouraged WIPO to pursue a user-oriented approach, in particular by continually modernizing the technical infrastructure at users' disposal on the WIPO website and providing on-site and online training. GRUR appreciated the efforts made by WIPO, drawing on its extensive experience of administering the aforementioned treaties and systems, to set standards and provide tools for IP offices in all Member States. Conscious that IP law was no longer strictly the domain of technical and legal experts but rather a focal point of global politics, GRUR would continue to monitor WIPO initiatives in the area of IP law harmonization. Furthermore, GRUR would support the Organization's efforts to explain how a balanced and efficient IP system could benefit countries at all levels of development, including by making their economies more competitive. Lastly, GRUR was grateful to WIPO for spearheading efforts to address IP law issues relating to frontier technologies and for providing a discussion forum at the highest diplomatic level, with the foremost experts in the fields of technology concerned.

174. The Representative of the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) said that 2023 marked the 85th anniversary of JIPA, which had a membership of over 1,300 companies and organizations. JIPA shared the WIPO vision of a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere was supported by IP for the good of everyone. It saluted the role of WIPO in leading

international discussions on IP-related issues. WIPO and JIPA had a very good cooperative relationship, and had recently jointly hosted or supported events in Japan on the GII, diversity and WIPO GREEN. JIPA looked forward to further collaboration with WIPO. There had been remarkable progress in technological developments surrounding AI and data, bringing about major changes in society. IP was expected to become a common language for understanding innovation, and a broad discussion on the positioning of IP would be the basis for promoting and sustaining innovation. It was hoped that the knowledge and experience of WIPO and JIPA would contribute to innovation for sustainable future growth and global development.

175. The Representative of the Korea Intellectual Property Association (KINPA) said that KINPA represented In-house IP experts in companies in the Republic of Korea with the aim of stimulating growth and fostering the competitiveness of its member companies in the field of IP. Since meeting with the WIPO Director General, KINPA had been advising its member companies to promote useful WIPO services, including the PCT and the Madrid and Hague Systems. KINPA had recently gathered comments from its member companies on matters including grace periods, conflicting applications and prior use rights. Those comments had been delivered to Group B. KINPA would continue to participate actively in the Assemblies to enable WIPO to provide the services most useful to KINPA member companies.

176. The Representative of *Ordre suprême des ancêtres* (OSA), an organization bringing together African kingdoms, chiefdoms and family groups, expressed concern with regard to the lack of consensus among members of the IGC on some key issues that should be integral to the draft legal instrument, including the need for clear and precise definitions of the terms “beneficiaries” and “local communities”. The term “beneficiary”, as used in the text, was not included in the definitions under the protection clause, and was limited to two generic concepts: Indigenous and local communities. The definition of “local community” was vague and could be subject to broad interpretation. To protect religious rights, women’s rights and the rights of minorities in local communities, OSA had proposed to the IGC that the concept of chiefdom and its component aspects should be mentioned in the draft instrument and should be included as a key element of the definition of “local communities”.

177. The Representative of the Patent Protection Association of China (PPAC) said that PPAC, as a permanent observer to WIPO, called on all countries to work together to tackle global climate change through a dual approach of mitigation and adaptation, by strengthening innovation, commercialization and dissemination of green technology. WIPO should continue to pay attention to the issue of data security arising from the implementation of the cloud-first strategy. Chinese should be added as a working language in the Hague System, to facilitate the use of the System in China.

178. The Director General of WIPO said that he had listened closely to the views expressed by Member States at the 64th WIPO Assemblies. He was heartened that many delegations had affirmed the vision of making IP a catalyst for growth and development, a goal that was relatable, understandable and connected to the grassroots level. That made IP more inclusive by connecting it more firmly with women and young people, MSMEs, indigenous communities and others underserved by the IP system; it also made IP a powerful tool to address common global challenges and the SDGs. With the guidance, views, directions, updates and information provided by Member States, the WIPO Secretariat and he himself felt empowered to continue to work with Member States. The relationship between the Secretariat and Member States was a partnership. Accordingly, with a view to advancing a common agenda in the coming days, the Secretariat looked forward to collaborating and engaging in dialogue with Member States in a spirit of partnership. The Director General echoed the many expressions of gratitude to WIPO colleagues from Member States and others for their work, both ongoing and in the previous year. Such work was not limited to senior management; it was a team effort involving people working on the ground, delivering results to Member States, engaging with them, understanding their needs and finding ways to make IP impactful, relevant and of service to them, their

innovators and their creators. He restated his gratitude to Member States for their support and expressed the hope to continue to work with them.

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