

Special Union for the International Deposit of Industrial Designs (Hague Union)

Assembly

**Forty-Fifth (25th Ordinary) Session
Geneva, July 8 to 17, 2025**

REPORT

adopted by the Assembly

1. The Assembly was concerned with the following items of the Consolidated Agenda (document [A/66/1](#)): 1 to 7, 10(ii), 11, 14, 20, 23, and 24.
2. The reports on the said items, with the exception of item 14, are contained in the General Report (document A/66/11).
3. The report on item 14 is contained in the present document.
4. Mr. Pascal Faure (France), Chair of the Hague Union Assembly, presided over the meeting.

ITEM 14 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

HAGUE SYSTEM

5. Discussions were based on document [H/A/45/1](#).
6. The Chair welcomed three new Contracting Parties to the Assembly of the Hague Union since its last session in July 2024, namely Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia.
7. The Secretariat explained that document H/A/45/1 sought to ease the burden on Hague users who had to submit priority documents directly to certain Offices of Contracting Parties. The Secretariat added that while the International Bureau always urged Offices to fully adhere to the spirit of the Hague System by foregoing the requirement for priority documents, where this requirement continued to apply, the availability of the WIPO Digital Access Service (hereinafter referred to as “WIPO DAS”) could make things easier for users. It was, thus, underlined as important that the greatest number of Offices of Contracting Parties to the Hague System joined WIPO DAS, the purpose of which was to facilitate the exchange of priority documents between participating Offices.
8. The Secretariat further explained that, cognizant of the aforementioned problem, the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs (hereinafter referred to as the “Working Group”) had asked the Secretariat to prepare the document under discussion, proposing the adoption of a recommendation that encouraged Offices of Contracting Parties to participate in WIPO DAS with respect to priority documents for design applications.
9. The Secretariat noted that if the proposed recommendation was adopted by the Assembly of the Hague Union, it would be recalled by means of an editorial footnote in the Administrative Instructions for the Application of the Hague Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the “Administrative Instructions”). Furthermore, the International Bureau would make reference to that recommendation in pre-accession and post-accession discussions with Offices of Contracting Parties that did not yet participate in WIPO DAS.
10. The Delegation of the United States of America stated that WIPO DAS was a notable success story of WIPO’s ability to improve and enhance the ability for applicants to protect their industrial design rights. The Delegation believed that WIPO DAS was the most effective user-friendly system for the exchange of priority documents. The Delegation explained that, for an international design application designating the United States of America, an applicant had to submit a certified copy of a priority application during the pendency of the application before the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and added that the USPTO did not charge a fee for the submission of a priority document. The Delegation noted that WIPO DAS enabled applicants to better navigate the disparate priority processes and requirements in jurisdictions across the globe, including the United States of America. The Delegation was aware that design filers, from the United States of America and from across the globe, had experienced challenges in perfecting a priority claim outside the United States of America, even when using WIPO DAS. In keeping with the spirit and user-friendliness of both WIPO DAS and the Hague System, the Delegation encouraged Contracting Parties to look at eliminating any extra requirements, such as translations and fees, beyond the provision of the priority document itself via WIPO DAS. The Delegation also encouraged Contracting Parties to allow for sufficient time and notice to comply with any extra requirements. The Delegation supported the proposed recommendation, believing that it was not an overly ambitious outcome, but, in fact, merely a public memorialization of best practices and approaches moving forward in the Hague System.
11. The Delegation of China supported the proposed recommendation, believing that the extension of WIPO DAS would further increase the efficiency of applications whilst reducing

cost. The Delegation also looked forward to further improvements of WIPO DAS by the International Bureau to lower the burden of Offices and users. Furthermore, the Delegation requested clarification as to why the agenda of the Assembly did not include a report on the Working Group.

12. In response, the Secretariat explained that it was not customary to report about the Working Group before the Assembly of the Hague Union, but offered to look into the suggestion for future sessions.

13. The Delegation of the Republic of Korea highlighted the significant step taken in its domestic legal framework to enhance design protection and facilitate international filings. The Delegation explained that Article 47.2 was introduced into the Enforcement Rules of the Design Protection Act, incorporating WIPO DAS into the domestic applications process. The Delegation added that WIPO DAS had also been applied to international design applications in the Republic of Korea since April 2020. The Delegation explained that such integration had substantially alleviated the burden on their users by reducing the need to submit multiple supporting documents, thereby streamlining the application procedure and improving accessibility. The Delegation strongly supported the continued promotion and adoption of WIPO DAS as a practical tool that benefited applicants and Offices alike by enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative costs.

14. The Delegation of Japan stated that WIPO DAS was an efficient tool for the exchange of priority documents between Offices and could reduce the burden on users as well as Offices to furnish and receive priority documents. The Delegation believed that it was desirable to expand the number of WIPO DAS participating Offices and therefore supported the proposed recommendation.

15. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia stated that it recently joined the Hague System. The Delegation added that its aim was to serve the interests of applicants in its country and beyond, and that it developed digital services to ensure that its services were more effective and of better quality in the Hague System.

16. The Delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that, according to the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "Geneva Act"), international applications might contain a declaration under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (hereinafter referred to as the "Paris Convention"), claiming priority of one or more applications filed in or for any Member State of the Paris Convention or any Member State of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Applicants wishing to claim priority under the Geneva Act were required to only include the information necessary to identify the earlier applications when claiming priority in an international application. The Delegation noted that the Hague System did not mandate the submission of priority documents to Offices of designated Contracting Parties. Recalling that the centralized filing and management of an international registration was one of the basic principles of the Hague System and served as a significant advantage for users, the Delegation stated that the direct submission of additional documents to Offices contradicted the spirit of the Hague System and imposed extra burdens and costs on its users. WIPO DAS would allow for the uploading and downloading of documents through a web interface without changing the existing systems of national Offices and users, thus enhancing efficiency and timeliness, and reducing financial burdens.

17. The Delegation of the Russian Federation stated that it did not object to decisions to add a recommendation to the Offices of Contracting Parties to participate in the WIPO DAS concerning priority documents for industrial design applications as an editorial footnote to Section 408(a) of the Administrative Instructions. The Delegation emphasized that such formal consolidation could provide significant assistance in the process of the accession of new participants to the WIPO DAS. Regarding the further improvement of the Hague System, the

Delegation noted that it proceeded from a commitment to the principle of multilingualism and the need to continue the work on modernizing the Hague System regarding the expansion of the language regime, including by introducing the Russian language. The Delegation stressed that increasing the number of languages would lead to a growth in the number of users of the Hague System, which in turn would have a positive impact on the income of the Hague Union, as more industrial design holders would be able to file applications and manage their applications and registrations using their national language. Therefore, the Delegation hoped for more active involvement of the Secretariat in working out the issue of expanding the linguistic regime of the Hague System. Furthermore, within the framework of adapting the Hague System to frontier information technologies, the Delegation emphasized the importance of continuing to explore the possibility of presenting 3D objects in international industrial design applications. The Delegation explained that in the Russian Federation, when filing an application for an industrial design patent through the national procedure, the applicant may, at their discretion, submit a 3D model of the industrial design in electronic form. The Delegation added that the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) adopted Standard ST.91, developed by the Task Force on 3D led by the Russian Federation. The Standard directly concerns the presentation of 3D models and 3D images in applications. As part of its work, the Task Force will continue to improve this Standard and draft a new proposal regarding the 3D models search. The Delegation reiterated its readiness for constructive dialogue to further improve the Hague System for the benefit of its users.

18. The Delegation of Estonia, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group, thanked the Secretariat for its work in relation to improving the use of the Hague System. The Delegation recognized the progress made and welcomed the proposed recommendation. Regarding the introduction of new languages into the Hague System, the Delegation considered that more in-depth discussions were needed on some related technical measures, especially in the context of potential negative financial implications that such a decision might cause for current and future users of the Hague System. The Delegation added that the discussions on this subject should continue. Taking into account the current geopolitical context, the Delegation was for the time being not in a position to support the introduction of the Russian language.

19. The Delegation of Poland stated that its Office had been successfully using WIPO DAS since September 2022. As an Accessing Office, the Office had been accepting priority documents through WIPO DAS, including for national and international patent applications, utility model applications, national and international industrial design applications and national trademark applications. The Delegation encouraged other Member States to join WIPO DAS. Regarding the possible introduction of new languages, the Delegation echoed the statement made by the CEBS Group. The Delegation was of the view that further discussions and thoughtful considerations were needed on this issue. Such possible introduction should be based on clear and objective criteria and should not entail a negative impact on users, in particular taking into account possible financial aspects of such decision. The Delegation was not in a position to support the introduction of the Russian language into the Hague System, as the aggressor state that persistently violated international law and the United Nations (UN) Charter and principles, which were also the bases of WIPO, should not make use of WIPO resources, funds and its global intellectual property (IP) registration systems, as long as it continued its unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine.

20. The Delegation of Samoa noted that it accepted copies of priority documents *via* email to expedite and increase the efficiency of the Hague System.

21. The Delegation of Ukraine aligned itself with the statements delivered by the CEBS Group and Poland. The Delegation appreciated the Secretariat's continued efforts to modernize and improve the efficiency of the Hague System, including through technical support and legal development initiatives. The Delegation strongly supported the proposed recommendation.

The Delegation was working towards the implementation and full use of WIPO DAS and appreciated the dedicated work of WIPO supporting that effort. In addition, the Delegation reiterated that any future development of Hague System should be grounded on the principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity in line with the UN Charter and relevant WIPO decisions. Regarding the possible introduction of new languages, the Delegation firmly believed that any such decision should be based on objective, reliable criteria and be supported by a demonstrable user need. The Delegation noted the absence of credible evidence supporting the inclusion of the Russian language into the Hague System. The continued lack of user demand as well as the potential administrative and financial burden that would be created by such an addition were well documented. It was emphasized that the introduction of a new language should not negatively affect the efficiency, affordability and accessibility of the Hague System for current users. In light of those concerns and considering the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the Delegation remained strongly opposed to the introduction of the Russian language into the Hague System. The Delegation remained committed to engaging constructively in the ongoing work of the Working Group and to supporting efforts that made the Hague System more inclusive, transparent and technically sound.

22. The Delegation of Latvia supported the statement delivered by the CEBS Group and welcomed the progress made by the Working Group as well as the Secretariat's efforts regarding WIPO DAS. Regarding the introduction of new languages, the Delegation reiterated that more in-depth consideration and discussion was needed. The Delegation maintained its strong position regarding the introduction of the Russian language into any WIPO system, including the Hague System, due to the ongoing war in the territory of Ukraine. The Delegation added that, to avoid further discussions on those matters and the allocation of significant resources to the introduction of one language into the Hague System, WIPO could prioritize strategic investments in advanced technologies such as language models or Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions. It noted that these technologies offered path to broader, more inclusive and cost-efficient linguistic accessibility across all WIPO systems, including the Hague System, without a need for resource investment for integrating one single language. The Delegation encouraged the Secretariat to explore those innovative options and technologies to serve the global community effectively.

23. The Delegation of Lithuania aligned itself with the statement delivered by the CEBS Group and the Delegation of Ukraine. The Delegation endorsed the proposed recommendation as broader participation in WIPO DAS would contribute to greater efficiency, reduced administrative complexity and improved service for applicants. The Delegation confirmed that its Office participated in WIPO DAS, which greatly benefited its users. Furthermore, the Delegation stated that it was fully aligned with those delegations that advocated for a principled and criteria-based approach to any future consideration of additional languages within the Hague System. It was imperative that such discussions were grounded on objectivity and did not impose undue burdens, particularly financial, on the users of the Hague System. At the same time, the Delegation stressed that, as long as the Russian Federation continued its unprovoked, unjustified and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, flagrantly violating international law and the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, it strongly opposed any initiative to introduce the Russian language into the Hague System. Endorsing such a step under current circumstances would be incompatible with its values and the international community's commitment to upholding the rule of law.

24. The Delegation of the Russian Federation pointed out that certain delegations, without restraint or careful choice of words, openly stated that they have no reasons other than political ones for obstructing the expansion of the Hague System's language regime. The Delegation added that it was impossible to dispute the fact that Russian language is one of the 10 most widely spoken languages in the world, with more than 255 million speakers. It had the status of an official language in several countries and is widely used for communication across the world. Numerous Russian-speaking diaspora made significant contributions to the development of

science and technology. Furthermore, one of the key indicators for the significance of the Russian language was its use as an official and working language in most multilateral international organizations in the context of diplomatic, economic and cultural ties as well as at a continental, regional and national level. The Delegation noted that it is convinced that implementing the initiative to introduce the Russian language into the Hague System would facilitate access for Russian-speaking applicants to the Hague System and would lead to an increase in applications not only from the Russian Federation but also from other States of Group of Central Asian, Caucasus and Eastern European Countries (CACEEC) and other WIPO Member States, including countries of the CEBS Group, where a significant proportion of the population considered themselves native Russian speakers and recognized Russian as their mother tongue.

25. The Assembly of the Hague Union adopted the recommendation, as set out in paragraph 7 of document H/A/45/1, with immediate effect.

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