

WIPO Coordination Committee

Eighty-Second (54th Ordinary) Session
Geneva, July 6 to 14, 2023

REPORT

adopted by the WIPO Coordination Committee

1. The WIPO Coordination Committee was concerned with the following items of the Consolidated Agenda (document A/64/1): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10(ii), 12, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25.
2. The reports on the said items, with the exception of items 22 to 25 are contained in the General Report (document A/64/14).
3. The reports on items 22 to 25 are contained in the present document.
4. Ambassador Mr. Alfredo Suescum Alfaro (Panama), Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee, presided over the meeting. Ms. Vivienne Katjuongua (Namibia) was elected Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee.

ITEM 22 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR, INTERNAL OVERSIGHT DIVISION (IOD)

5. Discussions were based on document [WO/CC/82/5](#).
6. The Chair opened Agenda Item 22 and invited the Director General to introduce the document.
7. The Director General informed the Committee that the post of Director, Internal Oversight Division (IOD), became vacant on February 1, 2023, due to the completion of the incumbent's non-renewable fixed-term tenure in January 2023. Noting that steps should be taken, where possible, to ensure that the start of the term of the Director, IOD, should not be the same as that of a new External Auditor, the Director General mentioned that the position was advertised initially on February 28, 2022, but the competition was later cancelled due to an insufficient pool of suitable candidates. He stated that the post was re-advertised widely between November 4, 2022 and December 8, 2022, including on the Organization's career portal and Internet outreach platforms, whilst the Vacancy Announcement (VA) was also shared with Member States. A total of 188 applications were received (148 were male and 40 were female candidates) for this position. The Director General also revealed that, based on the assessments and interviews, the Appointment Board concluded that three candidates fulfilled the requirements of the position and thus a recommendation was submitted to him for his consideration. After careful review of the Board's Report and the dossiers of the candidates, as well as the interview conducted with her, he proposed Ms. Julie (Juliana) Nyang'aya, national of Kenya, for appointment to the post of Director, IOD. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Internal Oversight Charter, the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC) was also briefed and consulted on the job content and on the recruitment process at its sessions in 2022 and 2023 and had endorsed the nomination of the candidate proposed by him. The Director General highlighted that Ms. Nyang'aya held a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA), a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, and several certifications (Information Systems Auditor, Fraud Examiner, Public Accountant, and Global Reporting Initiative Sustainability Professional). Furthermore, she had worked for Deloitte and Touche LLP, as Partner in Kenya from 2007 to present, and as Senior Manager in the United States of America from 2004 to 2006. The Director General added that she displayed relevant knowledge of the United Nations (UN) organizations, their governance, regulations and rules, associated risks and controls, and that she had led complex audit, investigations as well as advisory activities, and had demonstrated significant experience leading relevant teams.
8. The Chair thanked the Director General for his presentation and opened the floor to delegations.
9. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document WO/CC/82/5 and the Director General for his presentation thereof. Considering her wealth of experience, resulting from her years of leading complex investigations, as well as working for Deloitte and Touche LLP, a leading provider of audit, assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax and related services, the Group endorsed the appointment of Ms. Julie (Juliana) Nyang'aya, from Kenya, as Director, IOD.
10. The Chair noted that there was no other delegations requesting the floor and concluded that there was no objection to the proposal by the Director General, he proceeded with the decision with respect to the Appointment of the Director, IOD as contained in document WO/CC/82/5.
11. The WIPO Coordination Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 1 to 7 of document WO/CC/82/5 and endorsed the appointment of

Ms. Nyang'aya as Director, Internal Oversight Division (IOD) for a non-renewable period of six years.

ITEM 23 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORTS ON STAFF MATTERS

(i) Report on Human Resources

12. Discussions were based on documents [WO/CC/82/INF/1](#) and [WO/CC/82/1](#).

13. The Chair introduced Agenda Item 23 and mentioned that there were two sub-items under consideration. For the first sub-item, two documents were under consideration: the Annual Report on Human Resources, document WO/CC/82/INF/1, and the WIPO Staff Pension Committee, document WO/CC/82/1. The Chair invited the Director of the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) to introduce the first document.

14. The Secretariat stated that the Annual Report on Human Resources covered the period from January 1 to December 31, 2022. The report comprised Human Resources (HR) matters for which reporting to the WIPO Coordination Committee was required, as well as an overview of HR-related policies, initiatives and activities of interest to Member States. The Secretariat mentioned that the challenges that it actually faced were more significant and complex than ever, with a number of global crises following the pandemic and an increasing number of uncertainties. This context was very likely to become, if it was not already, the new norm, and that the Organization was no different from other international organizations in facing these challenges related to digitalization, automation, demographic shifts, workforce diversity and inclusion, and regarding the need to adapt its culture. The key focus of the HR Strategy was to evolve the Organization so that it could deliver on its mandate in a constantly changing environment. The Secretariat added that, during the past year, it had continued to address the key objectives set out in the HR Strategy, keeping in mind that all the elements were connected, from hiring to talent management, development and performance to ensuring the best employee experience. It was therefore important to take an integrated approach in designing, developing and implementing the different initiatives. Furthermore, with the rapid advances in technology, the Secretariat increasingly had access to data that provided key insights into the workforce and the different work streams. The Annual Report on Human Resources, the HR Workforce brochure and the statistical data on geographical distribution and gender balance captured and reflected those insights that informed the Secretariat's work and helped support managers. The Secretariat declared that the first objective was establishing a new organizational culture and that HRMD had a key role to play in evolving the work culture of the Organization and that a diverse workforce was at the heart of this effort. The focus over the last year had been on initiating dialogue, notably through a "voice of employee" tool and the Organization's first employee engagement survey in May 2022. The data gathered as a result of these initiatives triggered a series of actions on key areas for development, at the team and organizational levels, as well as commitments on the part of managers to advance these actions, in September 2022. Two examples of the opportunities seized to increase collaboration within and between work programs, and to ensure a more cohesive approach to work, were the Regional and National Development Sector (RNDS) project teams and the Young Experts Program (YEP). The Secretariat stated that the second objective was organizational agility and mobility and that the Organization needed to build agility to react quickly when faced with new challenges and opportunities. This meant growing and attracting the skills that would help the Organization shift resources where they were needed and assembling diverse teams from across the Organization. The Secretariat added that it had increased the opportunities for internal mobility by opening temporary and project positions to internal colleagues while protecting their contractual status and that it was also reviewing HR policies to encourage

adroitness in performance and delivery and to lower internal organization barriers to mobility. The third objective was a performance-driven Organization. To encourage change, the Secretariat needed a performance management system that reflected the new vision. A key undertaking in this regard was the design, development and roll out of this new system. Moreover, in 2022, the Secretariat developed a Performance Philosophy, introduced 'calibration' at all levels for more consistency, and adjusted the existing Rewards and Recognition Program. The fourth objective was to develop skills. In this respect, the Secretariat stated that organizational agility required learning and development to focus on solutions to fill emerging skills gaps, reinforce key competencies, and create a culture of learning where employees were actively seeking opportunities to develop and improve. It added that the Learning and Development Task force had developed a Strategic Learning and Development Framework, which was to be informed by sector-level workforce planning. This would ensure that the training offered by the WIPO Academy met both employee and organizational needs. The Secretariat also mentioned that navigating change was not easy, so it was critical to train managers who could then support their teams in their learning journey. With respect to the fifth objective on engagement and wellbeing, the Secretariat stated that, by introducing new and improved policies and building an HR function that enabled, rather than regulated, and that identified and addressed issues, and generally sought to improve the employee experience, it wanted to ensure that employees continued to enjoy working at WIPO, not only due to the Organization's mission but also because they felt well treated. Furthermore, the Secretariat recognized that a flexible approach to working was business-critical, contributing to the work-life balance of its employees as well as to the Organization being an employer of choice. In this regard, a broad range of support services on wellbeing and mental health were provided to employees. Additionally, the "Guide to a Respectful and Harmonious Workplace" provided guidance and reinforced the principle that everyone has a right to work in a safe and respectful work environment. Issues were tackled holistically, with many initiatives embedded in other processes such as the induction program, the performance evaluation process and the exit questionnaire. On sexual harassment, the Secretariat highlighted that it was engaged in a multi-pronged endeavor to address the matter proactively, involving many internal stakeholders, namely the Ombudsperson, the Ethics Office, IOD, the Academy, the Gender and Diversity Specialist, the Staff Counsellor and Talent Business Partners. Pertaining to the sixth objective of a one-stop service model for HRMD, the Secretariat stated that HR transformation was more urgent than ever against the backdrop of the changing environment, as well as in the face of cost-pressures, hybrid work models and evolving employee expectations. At the same time, it needed to ensure that it supported the transformation of the Organization and new ways of working by adjusting its systems and policies to encourage change. With regard to the final objective on a diverse and inclusive workforce, the Secretariat indicated that when an organization embraced diversity and inclusion, it prepared itself for change. On geographical diversity, outreach efforts had helped to increase applications from a broader set of countries. The increased focus on the Africa Region had led to it taking the lead position on the number of applicants for the first time. The Secretariat added that it had made progress on posts subject to geographical distribution with Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern and Central Europe, Central Asia, and Africa, increasing their representation over the last two years. Furthermore, the Secretariat had made good progress on gender representation at the D2 level, but challenges remained at the P5 and D1 levels, noting, however, that the Organization was above most other UN technical agencies on gender representation at these levels. The Secretariat also explained that, following the decision of the WIPO Coordination Committee at its last meeting in July 2022, it had devised an action plan relating to geographical representation, as described in the Annex to the Annual Report. Based on the data available on upcoming vacancies, it mentioned that there was a significant window of opportunity to change the diversity of the Organization's staff over the coming 15 years, with 43 per cent of positions subject to geographical distribution becoming vacant. However, the Secretariat reiterated that this needed to happen as of this point in time if Member States and the Organization wanted to

make a difference, but this could not happen without the support and engagement of Member States.

15. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its presentation of the Annual Report on Human Resources and opened the floor to delegations.

16. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the Annual Report on Human Resources and, in the interest of time, recalled its statement on the report delivered at the 36th session of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) and wished to reiterate the message expressed in that statement. Group B added that it will be monitoring WIPO's organizational agility and mobility transformation, and requested the Secretariat to keep its Members regularly updated on this important topic. Group B also took note of the geographical diversity action plan included in the Annex of the report and mentioned that it provided a good overview of the content of actions, and the timescale for implementation. Group B added that it would follow with great attention how the action plan was carried out, and asked the Secretariat to inform Members, as soon as possible, if any adjustments were made. Finally, Group B affirmed that, while it was important for the Organization to ensure broader geographical distribution, it was of the view that merit remained the paramount criterion for the selection of staff.

17. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the Annual Report on Human Resources and welcomed the detailed inclusion of information on geographical balance, in line with the decision taken by the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2022. The Group took note of the achievements made during the period covered by this report, particularly in the aspect of gender parity and was encouraged by the representation of women in the workforce, particularly in senior positions over the years. The Group also wished to commend the Secretariat for initiating the action plan strategy, cognizant of the need to accelerate the enhancement of geographical diversity in the Organization's workforce. Furthermore, it echoed its call for more representation and opportunities for career advancement of Africans in the Organization, especially in senior positions. The Group also mentioned that, statistics provided by HRMD indicate that about 50 per cent of African Member States have no representative in the WIPO workforce and that it wanted to highlight that this was not a result of the lack of interest from Africans as the region has had the highest number of applicants by a significant margin. The Group was concerned about the lack of clarity on the process for selecting applicants, particular at the final stage of recruitment. It advised the Secretariat to consider automated screening at the beginning of the recruitment process, in-line with the practice in the UN. The Group stated that it would be helpful to organize a briefing session for Member States, to make available materials and tips, to help candidates overcome common pitfalls in their applications. The Group took note of the lack of reference to multilingualism, digital transformation and teleworking, and stated that it would appreciate more information on how the Secretariat intended to deal with these issues. Finally, the Group hoped that the positive trend seen in geographical diversity would be more visible in the near future, to enable the Organization to better reflect the people it served.

18. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States Group (CEBS), recalled its statement made during the 36th session of the PBC and thanked the Secretariat for having prepared the Annual Report on Human Resources, as contained in document WO/CC/82/INF/1. The CEBS Group took note of all the information presented in the Report and especially valued the proposals aimed at ensuring more equitable geographical as well as improved gender parity in the Organization. However, it was of the view that the limited progress in changing the persistently unfavorable situation with regard to geographical diversity was a reason of profound concern to its members. The CEBS Group added that geographical diversity of the Organization was about its future and would offer the Organization a better understanding of regional specifics of intellectual property (IP). The CEBS Group stated that for its members, geographical diversity was a prerequisite of the Organization's performance, ability

to develop well-tailored policies and deliver high quality results to IP stakeholders. In its view, despite efforts undertaken, it had not seen positive change with respect to employment of its members within the Organization's workforce, which continued to be at a very low level. While taking note of the Report, the Group saw an urgent need to review current recruitment policies and strategies, with a view of identifying challenges and problems. The CEBS Group also mentioned the need for more intensive efforts related to increased cooperation with respective institutions from regions that continue to be underrepresented, with an aim to further promote the Secretariat's employment opportunities. In the case of the Group, understanding the extremely low percentage of candidates selected for the final stage of the recruitment process required special attention. While the CEBS Group recognized the added value in the Focal Point Initiative, supporting capacity building among IP Stakeholders and raising awareness, an in-depth analysis was necessary with an aim to diagnose challenges related to the difficulties of progress being made through these policies in improving geographical diversity of WIPO. The CEBS Group assured that it would continue to engage in dialogue with the respective bodies and representatives of the Organization, with a view to undertake concrete activities and changes of this unfavorable situation.

19. The Delegation of China thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the report and highlighted that women represent 54.3 per cent of the workforce. The Delegation wished to convey its appreciation and congratulated the Organization on its progress on gender equality. It also believed that the principle of geographical balance should be equally supported and appreciated the Secretariat's efforts in this regard with the inclusion of an action plan for geographical diversity in the Report. The Delegation was of the view that the Organization should develop tangible, measurable goals and take pragmatic measures to improve geographical representation. It added that HR were a key component of any Organization. The Delegation stated that the Organization should advance with the times and adopt long-term planning to improve its HR structure, so that it would be a better fit for the future and for its operational needs.

20. The Delegation of the Russian Federation commended the Secretariat on the preparation of the Annual Report on Human Resources. It stated that the predominant factors when selecting candidates should be a high level of competency and equitable geographical representation, as stipulated in Article 9 of the WIPO Convention. With respect to the recruitment process, the Delegation stated its preference for manual screening of candidatures instead of machine screening, as this would lessen the likelihood of rejection of candidates who would have made insignificant and unintended errors in their files. The Delegation also called on the Secretariat to strictly adhere to the decisions taken by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), and which were supported by various UN resolutions. With respect to geographical diversity, it welcomed the action plan on this matter and hoped that the Secretariat would regularly report on its implementation in future reports. The Delegation also wished to see the continued work to improve the annual report, also including detailed information about future vacancies, not only detailed by post, but also the level of positions. Finally, the Delegation believed that it was necessary to develop a separate work portal on which the Secretariat would regularly update its statistics, including the nationals by country of origin. It added that such portals were in use by a number of UN family organizations and had proven their purpose to Member States.

21. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) commended the Director General on the Report, which included information on progress made towards staffing goals, as well as an overview of the HR-related policies, initiatives and activities. The Delegation wished to emphasize the importance of geographical representation, in all of the Organization's activities, especially in its staff composition. It believed that geographical representation and geographical distribution were critical elements in human resources practices of all UN agencies, ensuring that the workforce was reflective of the global community. In its view, not ensuring diversity into staffing policies, rules and procedures, policy development and implementation, could result in

ineffective solutions that would fail to address the needs of all Member States, especially those that had been discriminated against, particularly in the past years. The Delegation stated that, by prioritizing geographical diversity and group representation, the Organization would foster innovation, creativity and better serve its global constituencies. Therefore, the Delegation deemed it crucial to put an emphasis on these practices, to ensure equitable and inclusive decision-making in the Organization's human resources practices. Furthermore, to ensure the composition of the Organization's staff reflected the population it served, the Delegation suggested to the Director General to establish a task force to tackle the issue of geographical diversity by complementing current efforts and to adjust equitable geographical distribution of Member States, along with regional group diversity. It added that the Organization continued to be disproportionately composed of individuals from high-income countries, and a number of developing countries expected to increase the rate of all regions, especially, for example, the region in which it had been disadvantaged in terms of the percentage of staff composition. In the view of the Delegation, another issue related to human resources and the workforce that needed to be addressed was the balance between the level of innovation and creativity of the young population, women inventors and innovators, and at the same time, the number of represented countries and their contribution to the work of the Organization. The Delegation suggested to HRMD to continue programs that foster dynamism, creativity and innovative contributions of younger staff members, and recommended the recruitment of young professionals, thus reversing the current negative trend. Moreover, it firmly believed that despite all excellent work that had been done under the current leadership, there still remained more work to be done to ensure a more equitable, efficient and accountable Organization. The Delegation added that there was an urgent need to focus on equitable geographical distribution, rejuvenation of the workforce, the qualifications and multiple competencies, and multilingualism, all of which should be reviewed to ensure a holistic approach to address issues of equality and diversity. In order to improve efficiency and contribute to HR-related policies, the Delegation also encouraged HRMD to engage and collaborate more closely with the Office of Human Resources in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance of the UN. It also urged the Secretariat to foster collaborative plans and programs with other human resources organisms, in order to ensure that HR-related strategies of the Secretariat were aligned with those of the whole UN system.

22. The Delegation of Colombia expressed its pleasure to see the Chair presiding the meeting and thanked the Secretariat for the Report. It acknowledged the open and transparent manner in which the Secretariat had provided detailed explanations to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). The Delegation also acknowledged the efforts that had been made to open opportunities to women to work in the Organization, and that this reflected the policy that had been established by the Director General with the appointment of the Director, IOD, which had been endorsed earlier during the Committee's session. The Delegation hailed the efforts to improve programs and recognize skills by women as well as the training that ensured that there was a non-discriminatory environment to work in. The Delegation also welcomed the efforts made with respect to work life balance. As regards to geographical distribution, the Delegation shared similar concerns as the African Group, and stated that it would be working to ensure that the Organization could work in a system that improved the number of candidates from Latin America.

23. The Delegation of Nigeria congratulated the Chair on his election as Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee and aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. It also extended its appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat, especially the Director of HRMD, for the Annual Report on Human Resources, including the information on progress made towards staffing goals, as well as an overview of HR related policies, initiatives and activities of the Organization. The Delegation further extended its appreciation to the Secretariat on the achievements made during the period covered by the report, particularly on the aspect of gender parity. It also commended the Secretariat's effort to initiate the new action plan on geographical diversity and for being conscious of the dire need to

accelerate the improvement of diversity in the Organization's workforce. In its view, this was the bedrock for the effective functioning of the Secretariat and therefore the Delegation attached great importance to the effective administration of human resources, considering its relationship to organizational efficiency. It was in this connection that the Delegation took note of the gaps in geographical representation of staff within the Organization. The Delegation added that undue attention was focused on the number of applications received from each region, rather than the number of candidates selected and the reflection of the equitable representation of each region within the Organization. In its view, it was rather unfortunate to note that despite the large number of applicants from Africa, many of these applicants somehow had never made it to the selection stage. It was against this backdrop that the Delegation wished to call upon the Secretariat to review its strategies, pay attention and reflect on the equitable geographical balance of candidates selected overall, instead of merely projecting the number of applicants as a way of validating the outreach initiative. The Delegation also believed that efforts towards equitable geographical distribution should be anchored in strategic workforce planning, being mindful of the need to attract talent from over-represented and under-represented Member States, as well as of the challenges in each country's profile.

24. The Delegation of France aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B and commended the Secretariat for the preparation and the presentation of the Annual Report on Human Resources. It called upon the Secretariat to keep improving HR policies, particularly with regard to young people, women and geographical distribution. The Delegation believed that a strategy combining geographical distribution and equity deserved attention.

25. The Delegation of Zimbabwe expressed its appreciation for the Annual Report on Human Resources and for the strides made in gender equity and balance. It aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group. The Delegation also expressed its appreciation for the data on equitable distribution in the Secretariat, including segregated data on applicants and those selected and for facilitating vacancy announcements to nationals on the Organization's website. It expressed its concern that out of the 3,299 applicants from Africa, only 14 managed to be selected. The Delegation also noted that whilst applicants from Africa were long-listed, there was no sequence in the final stages however, where there were minimal African candidates being shortlisted for interviews and then selected. In that regard, the Delegation wished to ask the following questions, which may be addressed in future reports and engagements. It requested the Secretariat to clarify the criteria for the long-list, as it was of the view that a long-list of candidates would have met the minimum selection criteria and the discrepancy in the numbers between long-listed and short-listed candidates raised serious concerns. Furthermore, the Delegation queried whether the recruitment process did cater for a perceived bias on where applicants had obtained their qualifications. For instance, was an applicant with a qualification from a reputable African tertiary institution rated and ranked equally with one from a reputable developed country? Did recruitment boards cater for both gender and geographical diversity in shortlisting and in interviews, as was prevalent in other UN agencies? The Delegation welcomed the plan addressing geographical diversity and suggested in future that retirements at senior levels should also be reflected based on geographical regions. It also wished to receive clarification on whether staff on fixed-term limited-term appointments were included in the statistics and whether it was possible in the future to have statistics on geographical distribution for this class of employees. The Delegation looked forward to working with HRMD in achieving equitable geographic representation and wished to see a Secretariat which was diversified and inclusive, and which reflected the membership of the Organization.

26. As there were no other delegations requesting the floor, the Chair gave the floor to the Director General.

27. The Director General thanked the delegations which took the floor, as well as the many others that had engaged with the Secretariat privately, to talk about their concerns, aspirations, and hopes for the way the Organization should look and the way it should take care of its personnel. This was really something that helped the Secretariat to be close to Member States, to let them know what the Secretariat was doing and also for Member States to share what they wanted to see from the Organization. The Director General added that this spirit of open, inclusive and transparent engagement would carry on and stated that a lot of comments about diversity and inclusion were very close to his heart as well, coming as he did from a part of the world which was diverse, from a country with a mix of four national languages and ethnicities. The Director General mentioned his belief that a diverse organization was a strong organization, but there were three things that were needed to be kept in mind to achieve this together. First, the Director General stated that this was a technical Organization and the work carried out was highly specialized. Accordingly, what was needed was for the Secretariat to work with Member States to get the qualified candidates that have the best chance to succeed with their applications. It was not just about the numbers, it was also about quality, and that was something that needed to be addressed. The Director General was certain that with the work being done more broadly outside the context of recruitment, through the WIPO Academy, through the projects, and through the efforts and initiatives to bring IP, training, skills, capabilities, development to Member States, especially developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs), this would shift over time to come. Second, was partnership with Member States. The Director General expressed his gratitude to the many Member States that had stepped up and opened doors to the people in their respective countries, and that this was visible in the increased number applications as well as in the number of engagements his team has had with the institutions that have access to the talent who were interested in the work of the Organization. However, he stated that often there was a crescendo of energy by Member States around the time of the Assemblies, but the Secretariat did not always get the identical energetic response on these matters from Member States post-Assemblies. Hence, he appealed to Member States to partner with the Secretariat not just for a few weeks in a year during the lead-up to the Assemblies, but throughout the year. Third, the Director General stated that some of these changes would take some time, just by the nature of the fact that not all recruitments will be advertised. He hoped that Member States would understand that the Secretariat would work with them to implement the geographical diversity action plan and would report on the results in the future. The Director General requested Member States to be patient, as it would take time to change the mixture and makeup of the Organization. Likewise, the Director General indicated that taking care of the people of the Organization was highly critical to its success, and that, in light of his experience in managing the Organization, this point was taken seriously. Although diversity was an important element, creating the right environment and culture within this Organization that allowed it to be dynamic, open and transparent, was equally important in order for the Organization to better serve its Member States and the millions of creators and innovators. In that regard, the Director General confirmed that the Secretariat would not just be working on diversity, but also on the cultural transformation of the Organization, for which he requested the support of Member States. The Director General concluded by saying that by working together with Member States on these issues in order to make a difference together, he was very certain that over time, it would lead to the kind of Organization that everyone wanted. With the permission of the Chair, the Director General passed the floor to the Director, HRMD, to respond to the comments made by the delegations.

28. The Secretariat thanked the delegations for their positive comments and stated that it would continue to engage and exchange with Member States throughout the year on these issues. It added that it will report on a regular basis and that one of the key supports for this transparency and collaboration was indeed the ability to provide data. In response to the Delegation of the Russian Federation on the reference to portals, the Secretariat confirmed that this was what it was striving to achieve and the most recent version of the HR Workforce brochure, as of end-June 2023 had just been uploaded online. The Secretariat added that this document was updated twice a year at this stage, but the objective was to have this as an

online dashboard that will be available to Member States. The Secretariat thanked the Delegation of Nigeria for the reference to the fact that the Secretariat's efforts should be anchored in workforce planning. The Secretariat confirmed that this was critical in an expert organization that was going to lose half of its staff in a period of 15 years and added that this work was actually going to be very helpful in informing the Secretariat on the implementation of its geographical diversity action plan. It would also allow the Secretariat to share advance information with Member States in terms of what skills the Organization would be recruiting and this would be a constant exchange allowing Member States to start building the pipelines in-country for the expert skills that the Organization would require. Likewise, with respect to the comments made by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, the Secretariat sought to clarify the elements of number of candidatures versus number of selections, confirming that there was a relationship and that one did go with the other, although a large number of candidatures did not necessarily transform to selections. However, the Secretariat provided the example of Kenya, from which the Secretariat had received an increase in the number of candidatures, and which had led to more nominations for that specific country. The Secretariat also stated that it had taken due note of the importance of sharing information about the recruitment process and that it intended to continue to do that through the Focal Point Initiative. In response to the Delegation of Zimbabwe related to the recruitment process and about the elements of geographical and gender diversity on Appointment Boards, the Secretariat confirmed that these were criteria in the composition of such Boards. With respect to ratings of academic institutions, the Secretariat mentioned that this was not the element that made the difference between the long-listing and the short-listing, rather it was primarily the experience element that made the difference at this stage. In this regard, the Secretariat added that, for some P3 positions for example with up to 300 candidates, there would be quite a drastic reduction from the long-listing to short-listing stages, as generally on average around 10 candidates were short-listed for the written tests, which in turn determined the number for interviews as well. Nevertheless, the Secretariat mentioned that it understood that more needed to be done. In response to the Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Secretariat confirmed that it was aligned with the practices of other UN agencies and that it was participating in the working group on recruitment. Furthermore, the Secretariat added that it was actively looking at what was happening on the UN 2.0 on the evolution of recruitment processes, as this was also part of its work plan to start reviewing its own recruitment process. With regard to the point on the importance of looking at various populations, including young people, the Secretariat mentioned that it had expanded its youth programs over the last four years and that it intended to continue focusing on these populations, without disregarding other aspects. In as much as for geographical diversity, the Secretariat stated that, through data, it was also looking at targeted actions for specific populations. With respect to the comment made by the Delegation of Poland on behalf of the CEBS Group, the Secretariat highlighted that existing policies were not the reason for the issue of geographical representation, rather a combination of reasons. As an example of the conundrum faced on this issue, the Secretariat referred to ongoing discussions with the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) countries on geographical representation and indicated it had received no candidatures from at least five unrepresented Member States, whilst for other represented Member States the number of candidatures received was simply too low as compared to the overall number of applications. Yet, the Secretariat stated that it would continue to carry out its groundwork, which begins well ahead with workforce planning, and with communication to Member States about the specific needs in terms of skills of the Organization as a specialized agency.

29. The Chair noted that there were no other delegations requesting the floor and then proposed to the Secretariat to proceed to the next sub-item.

WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC)

30. The Secretariat introduced document WO/CC/82/1 on the WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC), and stated that the WIPO Coordination Committee had decided at its ordinary session in 1977 that the WSPC would consist of three members and three alternate members, with one member and one alternate to be elected by the WIPO Coordination Committee. The members proposed by the Director General for election by the WIPO Coordination Committee normally serve a four-year term of office. However, the Secretariat added that, in order to establish a process that would facilitate a broader-based call for, and consideration of, the candidates presented by Member States for the eventual election of the member and the alternate member of the WSPC by the WIPO Coordination Committee, in 2021, the terms of office for the incumbent members were reduced, exceptionally, to one and two years respectively. Accordingly, a new member of the WSPC was elected at the ordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2022, and at this present session, a new alternate would need to be elected by the Committee. In that regard, the Secretariat mentioned that, at its ordinary session in October 2021, the WIPO Coordination Committee elected the alternate member of the WSPC for a two-year mandate, up to the end of the ordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2023. Therefore, at that time, the Director General proposed the four-year term of office of the newly-elected alternate member. The Secretariat also added that, earlier this year, a circular *note verbale* was sent to Member States inviting them to propose candidates for the election of the alternate member of the WSPC for a term of office of four years. Consequently, the Secretariat mentioned that, after due consideration of the nominations received, the Director General had decided to propose Mr. Jean-Luc Perrin (France) for election as alternate member of the WSPC by the WIPO Coordination Committee.

31. The Delegation of the Russian Federation commended the Secretariat for the preparation of the report on the election of the alternate member of the WSPC and requested a few clarifications on the candidate, Mr. Jean-Luc Perrin, who for the past two years, was already the alternate member of the WSPC. According to the Delegation, Mr. Perrin's *curriculum vitae* reflected that, until he retired, he had occupied various posts within the Secretariat and it urged the Secretariat to look into the propriety of such an appointment, given the mandate and the purview of the WSPC and its terms of reference. The Delegation acknowledged that the WSPC is composed of three ordinary members and three alternate members, one of each, respectively, is elected by the WIPO Coordination Committee, designated by the Director General, and elected by and from among the participants in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) in the service of WIPO (participants). The Delegation wanted to know whether there was a potential conflict of interest with the fact that a former member of the Secretariat was being proposed for election to the WSPC.

32. The Delegation of France thanked the Secretariat for presenting the document and welcomed the proposal to nominate Mr. Jean-Luc Perrin, as the alternate member elected by the WIPO Coordination Committee to the WSPC. The Delegation was of the view that Mr. Perrin fulfilled all the requirements to be able to take on this role.

33. In response to the comment from the Delegation of the Russian Federation on a potential conflict of interest, the Secretariat recalled that Mr. Vladimir Yossifov was also a retiree when he was elected previously by the WIPO Coordination Committee and that there was a past history of similar practices. It also added that having someone that had already worked for the Organization and knew the subject matter was very valuable for the efficient follow-up of the work of the WSPC. Hence, the Secretariat stated that it did not see where this could cause any conflict of interest, and reiterated that this was a retiree and not an active staff member of the Organization.

34. The WIPO Coordination Committee elected Mr. Jean-Luc Perrin as alternate member of the WIPO Staff Pension Committee for a period of four years, up to the end of the ordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2027.

(ii) Report by the Ethics Office

35. Discussions were based on document [WO/CC/82/INF/2](#).

36. The Chief Ethics Officer introduced document WO/CC/82/INF/2 entitled the Annual report by the Ethics Office covering the period January 1 to December 31, 2022. The Chief Ethics Officer remarked that this was the first time she was presenting a report covering a full year of her work after joining in September 2021. The Chief Ethics Officer further stated that, the Ethics Office, as an independent office, had the privilege to continue assisting the Director General to enhance the Organization's culture of ethics, integrity, and accountability. She noted that the year 2022 marked an increase in requests of the services for the Ethics Office and despite challenges in managing the workload, the Ethics Office operated effectively and delivered record results. With regard to confidential advice and guidance, the Ethics Office had received and responded to 155 requests, an increase of nearly 300 per cent from 2021. The Chief Ethics Officer asserted that this had reinforced management and wider personnel's view of the Ethics Office as a trusted resource for advice, and a safe space for guidance and support. On protection against retaliation, the Ethics Office had received four formal requests for protection. The Chief Ethics Officer informed that one case had been closed as no *prima facie* case of retaliation had been established, while three others were referred to the IOD for investigation. The Chief Ethics Officer drew attention to the Ethics Office's focus on training, education and outreach. Concerning outreach activities, the Chief Ethics Officer had delivered a presentation during a Townhall meeting attended by approximately 750 members of personnel which was considered an effective way to get the ethics message across. She further commented that the Ethics Office had conducted bespoke workshops, and awareness raising sessions, at the request of Division Directors and Sector Leads. The Chief Ethics Officer reported that a remarkable undertaking was the launch of the new Ethics and Integrity at WIPO mandatory e-learning course in November 2022, achieving a 97 per cent completion rate. Regarding the Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interests (FDDI) and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the Chief Ethics Officer announced that WIPO had achieved 100 per cent compliance in both programs. Regarding the FDDI, she shared that the Ethics Office had launched (in 2023) the annual FDDI program using WIPO's own proprietary FDDI software. The Chief Ethics Officer explained that the use of this new in-house secure platform, together with the services of the new external reviewer would allow the program to be more effective and efficient and result in significant annual savings for WIPO. On policy, the Ethics Office had initiated the review of two policies: the FDDI policy and the Policy to protect against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits. The Chief Ethics Officer mentioned that the FDDI Policy had been issued recently with the launch of the FDDI exercise, while the Policy on retaliation was still in the review process. Finally, the Chief Ethics Officer affirmed that throughout 2022 the Ethics Office had engaged productively with the IAOC and had regularly attended quarterly meetings. Looking forward, the Chief Ethics Officer reaffirmed that the independent services provided by the Ethics Office in 2022 continued to promote an ethical and value-based approach in WIPO and that the Ethics Office looked forward to continuing its collaboration with WIPO management, and key stakeholders to deliver on its strategic priorities for 2023.

37. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the annual report and the Chief Ethics Officer for presenting the report. Group B noted that the Ethics Office was an indispensable part of the governing structure in WIPO and helped ensuring a working environment characterized by professional ethics. Group B mentioned that there had been a noticeable increase in requests for confidential advice and guidance since 2021 and urged the Ethics Office to continue to carefully monitor this increase.

Group B affirmed that, in that regard, it supported the efforts of the Ethics Office to better inform its strategy and to report more efficiently and consistently on the ethical maturity within WIPO. Group B also welcomed the significant increase in the completion rate of the new mandatory ethics e-learning training course since November 2022 and hoped that the trend would persist in the future. Group B remarked that they welcomed the fact that the office would publish an illustrated summary report to all WIPO staff members, in order to raise awareness on the results of the work of the Ethics Office and requested that the report be sent to Member States. Group B concluded by thanking the Ethics Office for its valuable work and stated that it looked forward to the continued key and active role that it embodied in this Organization.

38. The Delegation of Mexico thanked the Chair and for the work done by the Ethics Office and acknowledged the efforts made to improve institutional culture within the Organization through different initiatives. The Delegation noted the increase in the number of cases handled by the Ethics Office and its positive results. The Delegation continued by stating that, in its opinion, there were not enough resources to keep up with the rising workload, particularly with regard to matters involving policies and normative aspects. The Delegation observed that although the Director General's office and management expenditure have increased in the projected budget for the upcoming biennium, the amount of resources to the Ethics Office was not mentioned. The Delegation concluded by asking that going forward, they are informed of the budget allocation to the Ethics Office to ensure that the office has the appropriate levels of resources to carry out its work properly.

39. The Director General expressed his appreciation for the work carried out by the Chief Ethics Officer and the Ethics office and stated that part of the culture of any well-functioning, open, transparent and dynamic organization was a culture for ethics. In this regard, that was how we were able to respect one another and how we would trust in our membership and be able to do work the right way. The Director General stated that he was very pleased to hear feedback from participating Member States on this work. He assured the delegations that, together with the Chief Ethics Officer, they had been engaged in ongoing conversations on the right level of resources, on practices from other organizations and on how the Chief Ethics Officer could be supported. The Director General concluded by affirming his support of the important work carried out by the Ethics Office.

40. The Chief Ethics Officer thanked all the delegations and the Director General for their words of encouragement and appreciation. The Chief Ethics Officer informed that 2023 was the first year where the summary of the report presented to delegations would be presented to staff members. Notably, so that the conversation on ethics would continue for staff members to understand what the work of the Ethics Office was, and how it related to their day-to-day work. She added that all delegations would be given a copy of the report which in general was written in French and English, but that she would liaise with internal colleagues on other translations. Concerning the comment made by the Director General, on resources, she stated that it was indeed a continuing conversation as they considered the increasing demand for the Ethics Office services. The Chief Ethics Officer cited a quote by Jean-Jacques Cousteau which stated, "Without ethics everything happens as though we were all 5 million passengers on big machinery and nobody is driving the machinery, and its going faster and faster but we do not know where". She explained that this was certainly not a situation that the Organization would want to find itself in. The Chief Ethics Officer concluded by reaffirming her commitment to work with the Director General, and her overall commitment to her functions to ensure that ethics was at the forefront of the minds of WIPO colleagues, and thanked everyone.

ITEM 24 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

AMENDMENTS TO STAFF REGULATIONS AND RULES

41. Discussions were based on documents [WO/CC/82/2](#) and [WO/CC/82/4](#).

42. The Secretariat introduced document WO/CC/82/2 entitled “Amendments to Staff Regulations and Rules” and stated that amendments to the Staff Regulations were presented to the WIPO Coordination Committee for its prior approval, whilst amendments to the Staff Rules were approved by the Director General and were being presented to the WIPO Coordination Committee only for information. The Secretariat mentioned that this year, amendments to five Staff Rules were reported to the WIPO Coordination Committee for information, whilst amendments to seven existing Staff Regulations and one new Regulation were submitted to the WIPO Coordination Committee for its approval. The most substantive amendments concerned the introduction of new Staff Regulation 1.10 on the place of residence and of a new provision in Staff Regulation 4.9 on recruitment. With respect to the former, the Secretariat mentioned that the introduction of this new Staff Regulation 1.10 provided that staff must have their primary residence within the area of the duty station and that the remuneration, allowances and other entitlements that depended on the place of residence may be reduced for those staff who were exceptionally authorized to reside outside the area of their duty station. As for the new provision on recruitment in Staff Regulation 4.9, the Secretariat stated that this would provide the possibility to hold competitions open only to internal candidates (i.e. staff members on fixed-term or continuing appointments who were previously recruited following a competition). With respect to new Staff Regulation 1.10 and as some concerns were expressed during the Secretariat’s consultations with Group Coordinators, it confirmed that the proposed new Staff Regulation 1.10 was without prejudice to the existing contractual arrangements, which were and remained as follows: temporary appointments, fixed-term appointments and continuing appointments. These were the three types of staff appointments at the Organization in accordance with Staff Regulations 0.1(b), 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18. The Secretariat added that the creation of any new type of appointment would require the WIPO Coordination Committee’s prior approval, as it would necessitate amending the Staff Regulations. Furthermore, the Secretariat mentioned that, following these consultations with Group Coordinators, it also proposed a small modification to new Staff Regulation 1.10, by adding “at their request” in the second sentence. This was to make it abundantly clear that staff may be exceptionally authorized to have their primary residence outside the area of the duty station if they made the request.

43. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its presentation and gave the floor to the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group to introduce document WO/CC/82/4 entitled “Proposal of the African Group on Amendments to Staff Regulations and Rules”.

44. The Delegation of Ghana, on behalf of the African Group, wished to introduce a new provision under Staff Regulation 4.8, which would provide for promotions and appointments in the Director category to be reported by the Director General to the WIPO Coordination Committee with a short statement of the qualifications of the persons so promoted or appointed. The Group affirmed its confidence in the leadership of the Director General and encouraged him to continue the excellent work so far. It also assured the Organization of its unwavering support and dedication to further the Organization’s mandate. The Group firmly believed in the principles of transparency, accountability and fairness within the WIPO framework, and it was primarily due to these values that it had put forward this proposal. The Group was of the view that directors were pivotal to the efficient functioning and agility of the Secretariat, and that the Organization and its Member States agreed that the processes leading to these appointments should be conducted with the utmost transparency. By requesting the Director General to report promotions and appointments to positions in the director category to the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Group was presenting an opportunity for the Organization to

reinforce the confidence of Member States in the fairness and transparency of the decision-making process. The Group added that this reporting mechanism would familiarize Member States with individuals newly appointed to positions within the Organization, whilst a short statement outlining the qualifications would also serve as an informative tool for Member States, providing insight into the rationale behind these decisions. The Group mentioned that transparency fostered trust among Member States and promoted inclusivity and equal opportunities within the Organization. Moreover, sharing relevant information about the qualifications of those promoted or appointed would create an environment that encouraged transparency in the decision-making, and this was particularly significant for the African Group, as it aligned with its call to ensure equitable geographical representation and gender balance within the Organization. Furthermore, the proposal aligned with the global movement towards increased transparency and accountability in the public and private sectors, and many organizations within and outside the UN system had recognized the value of transparency in decision-making processes. The Group stated that by adopting this proposal, the Organization would demonstrate its commitment to these principles, replicating the trend of UN organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and set an example for other international organizations, thereby reinforcing its reputation as a leader in good governance. The Group acknowledged the Director General's prerogative in the director category, and his judgement in making these decisions. However, by providing this information, ideally through the Annual Report on Human Resources to the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Group was of the view that it would strike a balance between the Director General's authority and the need for reinforcing transparency. On this note, the Group wished to state unequivocally that its proposal was to solely be for information of the WIPO Coordination Committee. Given the reasons presented, the African Group urged Member States to support its proposal.

45. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Ghana for its presentation on behalf of the African Group and opened the floor to delegations.

46. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Director General for having prepared document WO/CC/82/2 setting out the amendments to SRR. It took note of the proposed amendments and was pleased to see changes in working conditions post COVID-19, such as the generalization of teleworking, reflected in the amendments. With regard to Staff Regulation 4.9, the Group welcomed the differential element of internal talent in principle and understood that the proposed amendment would operate in line with the overarching consideration of the recruitment exercise, which was the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in the recruitment and appointment of staff members. There were some proposed amendments, for instance, Staff Regulation 4.9, which didn't use gender neutral language, and since the general rules of procedure had been amended to use such language, the Group was of the view that it would be consistent to use gender neutral language in this instance as well. Finally, regarding the introduction of new Staff Regulation 1.10, by adding the words "at the request" in the second sentence, the Group wished to ensure that the definition section within the SRR was linked to the new Regulation 1.10. The Group once again thanked the Director General for giving it the opportunity to review these documents. Regarding the African Group's proposal contained in document WO/CC/82/4, Group B thanked the African Group for their proposed amendment to the Staff Regulation and Rules. Group B however expressed that it was still trying to understand what this proposal sought to achieve, in particular on the objectives of the required reporting of the proposal. The Group mentioned that it fully supported appointments based on merit and considered HRMD fully capable of this task, and did not see the need to involve Member States through the WIPO Coordination Committee in such decisions.

47. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group thanked the Director General, the Secretariat and engaged Member States for the proposed amendments of the SRR, as contained in document WO/CC/82/2. As already indicated in the statement made by the Group on the Annual Report on Human Resources, limited progress made with respect to

greater geographical diversity in the Organization's workforce was of concern to the Group's members. In its view, transparency, objective competition procedures, combined with ensuring access to materials containing information and knowledge required of the candidates, was a prerequisite for moving the process forward. Taking into account the current situation, the Group was not in a position to accept the currently proposed change to Regulation 4.9, according to which some vacancies would be open to internal candidates only. The Group saw the need for further work in this regard, which would allow for a better understanding of the precise parameters related to the types of positions opened under this category, their numbers or factors, which would determine the need for this specific recruitment track. The Group stated that it was ready to actively engage in this discussion.

48. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked the Director General for preparing the document on the amendments to the SRR, and took note of the amendments in Annex 2. Under Annex 1, the Group approved Staff Regulation 1.10, however on Staff Regulation 4.9, although it appreciated the initiative of the Director General to promote the career advancement and mobility of staff, there were concerns about the proposal for vacancies to be filled by competition only open to internal candidates. The Group believed that the Regulation in its current wording would hinder efforts towards attaining due geographical balance and the inclusion of unrepresented Member States and under-represented regions in the Organization's workforce. The Group suggested the following text for the advancement of staff, whilst at the same time addressing the needs to allow for geographical balance: "Vacancies to be filled shall be published on WIPO's recruitment website. Such vacancies may be open only to internal candidates who meet the minimum requirements and shall be within 30 per cent of the total number of vacancies, if the Director General so decides. Only staff members on fixed-term or continuing appointments, following competition within the meaning of Regulations 4.9 and 4.10 shall be considered as internal candidates, with the exception of fixed-term staff members under either funds-in-trust agreements or for approved projects".

49. The Chair requested the Delegation of Ghana to provide the Secretariat with the text that it had just proposed so that the Secretariat could display it on the screen.

50. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) thanked the Director General for the preparation of the document on the amendments to the SRR. The Delegation mentioned that it had raised its concerns during the informal consultations convened by the Secretariat two weeks prior. While it acknowledged the importance of mobility and promotion for current staff members of the Organization, in its view, the new amendments were not inclusive and exclusive enough to recognize the reasonable concerns of Member States, especially in terms of geographical and gender balance and in ensuring transparency. The Delegation stated that the amendments needed to be further negotiated among all Member States to ensure that the new practices would be equitable, diverse, and inclusive enough to serve as a new policy of recruitment for the workforce of the Organization. The Delegation's specific concern covered two amendments, the new Regulation 1.10 on the place of residence, and the introduction of the new provision in Regulation 4.9 on recruitment. As for the latter, the Delegation suggested that the Secretariat work around and select an appropriate percentage, in order to restrict the framework for implementation of the amendment proposed by the Secretariat. It encouraged the Secretariat to carry out consultations, so that the legitimate concerns of Member States would be taken care of. Finally, the Delegation provided its support to the proposal made by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group.

51. The Delegation of the United States of America thanked the Director General for compiling the amendments to the SRR and noted with appreciation the efforts to synchronize the Organization's regulatory framework with the best practices in the UN common system. With respect to Regulation 1.10, the Delegation requested information on two points. The first was whether the Secretariat required staff to notify it of a change in the place of residence within a specific number of days, and second, which steps the Secretariat would take with

respect to misconduct within the accountability framework. Regarding the proposal by the African Group contained in document WO/CC/82/4, the Delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B. It noted that, given the number of director positions, this change would negatively impact the Secretariat's ability to recruit and promote in a timely manner. As of December 2022, the Organization had nine executive-level staff and 71 director-level staff, and applying this proposal would be more than a 700 per cent increase in positions being approved by the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Delegation believed that this would negatively impact workflow and activity, and consequently morale. The Delegation mentioned that it supported the continued implementation of the Secretariat's recruitment principles, the first of which was to appoint the strongest candidate, meeting the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.

52. The Delegation of Vanuatu thanked the Director General for having prepared the amendments to the SRR and took note of the Secretariat's efforts to improve geographical representation. Despite this, the Delegation recognized that there was no staff in the Organization's workforce from its region and called upon the Secretariat to make the extra commitment and specific interest to have equitable geographical representation in the workforce.

53. The Delegation of Singapore thanked the African Group for its proposal contained in document WO/CC/82/4 and sought to understand the objectives of the proposal. In its view, oversight by Member States did not entail engaging into looking at the day-to-day operations of the Organization. The Delegation stated that appointments and promotions to positions, especially at senior levels, should effectively be secured by individuals on the basis of merit.

54. The Delegation of China thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the document and took note that there was a proposal to amend Staff Regulation 4.9, which provided for some positions only to be open to internal candidates. The Delegation took note that the objective was to increase internal mobility of staff and it understood that to increase the possibility of internal mobility would have a positive impact on the career development of staff. This in turn would increase the motivation and competitiveness of staff. However, the Delegation sought to know what the criteria were to select internal candidates for certain positions, and what were the other mechanisms put in place to ensure the transparency, accountability and fairness of the competitions as well as the grades and scope of the competitions of these positions.

55. The Delegation of the Russian Federation mentioned that it sympathized with the Secretariat regarding the need for regularizing entitlements and allowances with respect to the place of residence of staff members who were working outside the duty station. The Delegation believed that this approach was justified on the whole, and that given the clarifications provided by the Secretariat and the additional text proposed in the amendment, it stood ready to support the proposed amendment to Staff Regulation 1.10. With respect to the amendment in Staff Regulation 4.9, the Delegation stated that it had heard the arguments by other Member States and Groups, and that perhaps it did make certain sense in order to stave off potential abuses in recruitment to circumscribe the cases where competitions were held for internal candidates only. It added that it would also make sense to limit such competitions, by a certain number a year or to agree on the percentage of staff who would be eligible for such internal competitions.

56. In response to the point made by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, the Secretariat duly took note on the use of gender neutral language and stated that this will be systematically addressed in the future. The Secretariat also requested additional clarifications from the Group with respect to its point on the definition section within the SRR linked to the new Regulation 1.10.

57. In response to the clarification sought by the Secretariat, the Delegation of the United Kingdom stated that it was primarily to ensure that the new regulation and all of the definitions were picked up despite the different clauses.

58. The Secretariat thanked the Delegation of the United Kingdom for the clarification and assured it that this had been duly noted. With respect to the proposal by CEBS Group requesting further work on the introduction of the new provision on internal recruitment under Regulation 4.9, the Secretariat stated that the Organization was quite unique in the UN system, in the sense that there was no previous practice of advertising competitions internally, and also no preference given to internal candidates, as per its regulatory framework. It added that, having recently liaised with 14 other organizations of the UN system, all of them had either both a preference for internal candidates and the possibility for internal competitions, or at least one of them, whilst the Secretariat was the only one that did not have either of these possibilities. Therefore, the Secretariat was of the view that it was not requesting something that was misaligned from the rest of the UN system. With respect to the point made on the scope by the Delegation of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, the Delegations of Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation, the Secretariat highlighted that, as stated during the informal consultations, it was proposing this amendment to cover a limited number of vacancies and only in specific cases such as for the sake of business continuity but also transfer of knowledge in the context of an Organization where 50 per cent of the professional population would retire over the coming 10 or 15 years. Additionally, the Secretariat underlined that it would use this possibility only if the skills were available internally and under condition that enough internal candidates would be available for a real competition. It added that if it did not have sufficient candidates who met the requirements or if there was a competition and no internal candidate was selected, then the position would be advertised externally in any case. Furthermore if, on the other hand, an internal candidate was selected, then the selected candidate's former position would become vacant and in turn it would be open for external competition. Consequently, the Secretariat emphasized that there would be no influence on the overall geographical representation of the Organization from that perspective. With respect to the comments from the Delegation of the United States of America on Regulation 1.10 and its application, the Secretariat clarified that there was already a requirement in its current system for staff members to report when working out of the duty station. Similarly, Rule 1.13.1 (a) stipulated that Staff members should be responsible for informing the Director General promptly in writing of any change which might have affected their status and entitlements under the SRR. The Secretariat also highlighted that, with respect to non-compliance, it was not very difficult to ascertain where people were working when connected. Additionally, having access to a secure IT network was also one of the criteria for the Secretariat to validate any request to work outside of the duty station, and finally if managers deemed that business needs dictated onsite presence, the request to work outside of the duty station would not be validated. The Secretariat also explained that in cases of misrepresentation, it would be considered misconduct and an investigation would be initiated. If the misconduct was substantiated, disciplinary action would be triggered by the Administration.

59. The Delegation of Paraguay thanked the Secretariat for its presentation and for having been available to answer all of the questions raised at the different informal meetings, as well as at this session. Nonetheless, the Delegation was still not clear about how the proposed amendment on Regulation 4.9 would be applied and was of the view that more work was needed on this point. The Delegation was also certain that appropriate mechanisms should be found to ensure that all staff in the Organization remained motivated. The Delegation conveyed its availability to continue to engage on this issue.

60. The Delegation of Mexico took note of the proposed amendments to the SRR and stated that it would support the approval of new Regulation 1.10 on the place of residence. As regards Regulation 4.9, the Delegation of Mexico requested more information on the percentage or the average number of posts that would be concerned as well as the scope of the change in order

for it to support the Secretariat's proposal. With respect to the proposal of the African Group on Regulation 4.8 on the Director General informing the WIPO Coordination Committee of appointments and promotions in the director category, and although the proponents had stated that the aim of the proposal was to inform the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Delegation believed that it would be relevant to further clarify the aim of this amendment. It reiterated that it was still unclear about the specific reasons behind this proposal and questioned why the WIPO Coordination Committee needed to be informed and what would be expected from it as a follow-up to this decision, once it had access to this information. The Delegation believed that it was not in the remit of the WIPO Coordination Committee to be in charge of micromanaging or be involved in internal decisions, as the SRR stated that the Director General was in charge of appointing all staff members.

61. With respect to internal mobility of staff and the possibility that some competitions would be exclusively open to internal candidates, the Delegation of Brazil wished to add its voice to the statements made by other delegations, such as the Delegation of Paraguay, which had raised questions and concerns. The Delegation was of the view that these should be taken into consideration as regards how this Regulation would be implemented, particularly when it came to countries that were unrepresented or regions that were underrepresented in the Organization's workforce. The Delegation also stated that the introduction on the proposed amendment to Regulation 4.9 contained in document WO/CC/82/2 emphasized the importance of following best practices amongst the other UN system agencies. However, it referred the Committee to a resolution that was approved by the UN General Assembly in 2014 that stated the following on mobility: "request the Secretary-General, when considering vacancies, to have equal treatment of internal and external candidates". Consequently, the Delegation questioned how this proposal was aligned with best practice within the UN system.

62. The Secretariat acknowledged the concerns raised by delegations with respect to the introduction of a new provision in Regulation 4.9. It drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that, in 2022, in over 20 per cent of the competitions advertised externally, the successful and selected candidates turned out to be internal ones. This meant that administrative resources as well as time had been expended, whereas if these had been competitions only open to internal candidates, the process could have been streamlined and accelerated. Nevertheless, the Secretariat confirmed that it was ready to engage with Member States on the conditions and implementation of this new provision and it recalled to the Committee that this was largely an effort to send a message to internal candidates that their careers were important and that they would have sometimes the possibility to grow through these internal competitions. The Secretariat also took note of the resolution referred to by the Delegation of Brazil and called attention to the fact that this was more relevant on the issue of equal treatment. It also added that in other UN agencies, although vacancies might have been advertised externally as well, only internal candidates were considered as a first step, and this did not correspond to the proposed approach on the new provision under Regulation 4.9 that would focus in limited cases on internals as a first step and on externals subsequently, if the process did not succeed.

63. Before moving on, the Chair requested a clarification from the Delegation of Ghana on the relationship between the proposal contained in document WO/CC/82/4 on behalf of the African Group, and the proposed text it submitted thereafter and which was projected on the screen. He wished to know whether this was a new proposal linked to a Regulation or a substitution of the proposal that was presented in document WO/CC/82/4, and how the Delegation wished to proceed.

64. The Delegation of Ghana informed the Chair that the proposal on the screen was not the same as the one that was proposed by the African Group in document WO/CC/82/4, but was in response to the proposed amendment of Regulation 4.9 to accommodate the concerns of the Group on a particular point relating to recruitment open only to internal candidates.

65. The Delegation of Nigeria requested the kind indulgence of the Chair to request a recess of 10 minutes, so that members of the African Group could consult and revert to the Chair as soon as possible.
66. The Delegation of Poland, speaking on behalf of the CEBS Group, requested a point of clarification on whether Member States were being invited to further consider the proposal being projected on the screen so that it could transmit this information to its members.
67. Bearing in mind the requirement for geographical balance, the Delegation of Paraguay requested the Secretariat to clarify on how this proposal on Regulation 4.9 would be implemented and what would be the limited number of cases when competitions would only be open to internal candidates, as well as what would be the minimum number of internal candidates.
68. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, requested the Chair for a 10-minute recess to consider and revert on the African Group proposal contained in document WO/CC/82/4.
69. The Chair suspended the agenda item for informal consultations.
70. Reverting to the agenda item, the Chair requested an update from the Delegation of Ghana on the proposal and the position of the African Group.
71. The Delegation of Ghana, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked all delegations who had made comments on the African Group proposal on the amendments to the SRR contained in document WO/CC/82/4. The Group noted with appreciation the commitment of the Director General to strengthen the Organization's staff in the director category and looked forward to engaging further with the Secretariat on this issue. On this basis and the Group's trust in the Director General, and having noted and taken into account the legitimate concerns of Member States, the Group wished to withdraw its proposal on the amendments to the SRR contained in document WO/CC/82/4. It also stated that the one proposed earlier and projected on the screen had no link with this proposal, but was an effort to find some middle ground to encompass the concerns of Member States with respect to Regulation 4.9.
72. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Ghana and sought clarification on whether the proposal projected on the screen was still on the table or was also withdrawn.
73. The Delegation of Ghana stated that that was just part of the statement, as an effort to make a contribution to the discussion on Regulation 4.9.
74. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Ghana for the clarification and mentioned that, as always, flexibility and trust were two main aspects in the work of this and other organizations, and was happy to see that both of these still remained in this realm. On the proposed amendments to the SRR contained in document WO/CC/82/2, he was of the view that it was best to proceed *via* informal consultations with the Regional Coordinators in order to reach a consensus, noting that there had already been ongoing consultations.
75. The Delegation of Poland stated that it would feel more comfortable if it could first share the proposal with the members of the CEBS Group, as some of them were not part of the WIPO Coordination Committee, but would nevertheless be interested in the matter. Therefore, it requested the Chair to be able to first have this conversation amongst the members of the CEBS Group before the meeting with Regional Coordinators.
76. The Chair clarified that the text proposed by the African Group and projected on the screen was not a full proposal, but part of the statement of the Group.

77. The Delegation of Poland mentioned that some of the specific proposals of the African Group with respect to Regulation 4.9 would be of interest to the CEBS Group members.

78. The Chair mentioned that there would be an announcement when consultations would take place after the WIPO General Assembly had convened later that afternoon. He then proceeded to suspend the agenda item.

79. Reopening the agenda item, the Chair recalled that discussions on this item had been suspended the previous day in order to hold consultations with various Groups and delegations. The Chair was pleased to announce that, following these consultations and thanks to the flexibility, skills and professionalism shown by all Groups and delegations, agreement had been reached on a consensus decision text, which he then requested the Secretariat to display on the screen. The Chair read the proposed decision paragraph and gave delegations a few moments to review the paragraph.

80. The Chair noted that there was no delegations requesting the floor and concluded that there was no objection to the proposed decision paragraph. He then proceeded with the decision with respect to the amendments to the SRR as contained in document WO/CC/82/2.

81. The WIPO Coordination Committee:

(i) approved the amendments to the Staff Regulations as provided in Annex I, document WO/CC/82/2, with the exception of the proposed amendment to Staff Regulation 4.9 and subject to paragraph (ii) below;

(ii) approved a new Staff Regulation 1.10 entitled "Place of Residence", reading as follows: "*Staff members shall have their primary residence within the area of their duty station. The remuneration, allowances and other entitlements that depend on place of residence may be reduced for staff members who are exceptionally authorized, at their request, to reside outside the area of their duty station.*";

(iii) recognizing the importance of providing new career enhancement opportunities for WIPO staff, and taking note of the Organization's efforts to encourage talent mobility, decided to continue discussing measures aimed at improving career growth and development at WIPO; and

(iv) noted the amendments to the Staff Rules as provided in Annex II, document WO/CC/82/2.

82. The Delegation of Argentina requested the floor to express its thanks to the Chair, the Secretariat and Member States for all the constructive work during the informal meetings. It added that the Secretariat had made great efforts to try and generate the necessary conditions to ensure that the Organization's staff had a fruitful and enjoyable career, with a good balance between their professional lives and their personal expectations, as well as work life balance. Therefore, the Delegation was very grateful for the dialogue and for the possibility to interact with the Secretariat to exchange views on how to improve working conditions in the Organization. This was a matter of concern to the Delegation as it was very committed to this issue and it stood ready to continue to work to ensure such positive outcomes at forthcoming Assemblies.

ITEM 25 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

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

83. Discussions were based on document [WO/CC/82/3](#).

84. Introducing the agenda item on the amendments to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the Legal Counsel drew the attention of delegations to document [WO/CC/82/3](#). The Legal Counsel recalled that the Assemblies of Member States were being invited to endorse the amendments to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission, or the ICSC, as provided in the Annex of the document. She further recalled that on December 30, 2022, the UN General Assembly decided to amend Articles 10 and 11 of the Statute of the ICSC, in relation to its authority to take decisions on the amounts of post adjustments. The Legal Counsel explained that the need to amend the ICSC Statute arose because its provisions on the authority to decide post adjustment multipliers were interpreted differently by the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization (ILOAT) and the UN Appeals Tribunal. She added that the amendments to the ICSC Statute aimed to resolve the conflicting judicial interpretations by these two Tribunals which are at the apex of their respective jurisdictions in the UN common system. The Legal Counsel informed the delegations that the amendments were not automatically applicable to WIPO; as a specialized agency, its Members States were required to decide whether to endorse the amendments and that was the purpose of the proposed decision. In closing, the Legal Counsel stated that once endorsed by the Member States, the Director General would provide formal notification of acceptance of the Statute amendments to the UN Secretary-General. That was an administrative step to complete the acceptance process, and as such, did not require a separate decision by Member States.

85. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing document [WO/CC/82/3](#), indicating that it explained and contextualized the amendments to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission. The Group welcomed the legal clarity provided by these amendments, namely that the classification of duty stations fell within the ambit of the UN General Assembly. Accordingly, Group B supported the adoption of a decision for the endorsement of these amendments, to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission, by the WIPO Coordination Committee. Group B stated that its members were invited to intervene in their national capacity for further comments.

86. The Delegation of Mexico made a statement on behalf of the Delegation of Spain and Mexico. Both delegations wished to stress the importance of this issue because these amendments were led by some international organizations that were subjected to the ILOAT, including WIPO. The Delegation noted that the specialized organizations had called the attention of their respective Member States to the difficulty of having two scales of post adjustments, which meant that it was difficult to have a common system for salaries among the UN system. The Delegation further stated that the amendments to Articles 10 and 11 were the solution that would allow the specialized agencies, that were interested in doing so, to overcome problems between the different administrative tribunals. The Delegation observed that for the members of the UN system and its employees, the Member States have tried to overcome this legal gap, and stated that they wanted to support these amendments to the Statute of the ICSC. The delegations proposed a decision paragraph that aimed to respond to the concerns of the cost of living, and suggested that the decision paragraph proposed by the Secretariat be changed, so that the text could read as follows, in English: "The Coordination Committee is invited to endorse the amendments of the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission, as provided in the annex of the document [WO/CC/82/3](#), to be notified immediately, in writing to the Secretary-General of the United Nations". Therefore, the Delegation suggested adding a second paragraph: "The WIPO Coordination Committee requests the Director General

to implement the official ICSC post adjustment multipliers provided after the date of the acceptance of those amendments by WIPO, consistent with its legal obligations”.

87. The Delegation of Germany supported the statement delivered by the delegations of Mexico and Spain, as well as the changes in the decision that were proposed by these delegations. The Delegation stated that it supported equal treatment in all of the UN organizations and urged WIPO to implement the ICSC decisions in a timely manner.

88. The Delegation of the United Kingdom supported the statement given by the distinguished Delegate of Mexico on behalf of the delegations of Mexico and Spain and their proposed amendments.

89. The Delegation of the United States of America supported the statement made by Group B and the proposal made by the delegations of Spain and Mexico. Furthermore, it thanked the Secretariat for the document and stated that it strongly supported WIPO's alignment with the amendments to the ICSC Statute.

90. The Delegation of Canada expressed its support for the statement by Group B on the issue, as well as the statement by the delegations of Mexico and Spain. The Delegation further expressed extra support for the proposed decision language as outlined by the Delegation of Mexico.

91. The Delegation of Japan expressed its appreciation for the effort made by the Secretariat in preparing document WO/CC/82/3 that explained the background of the amendments to the Statute of the ICSC. The Delegation welcomed the clarity about the issue of the ICSC's authority provided by these amendments and supported the endorsement of these amendments to the Statute of the ICSC by the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Delegation expressed its support for the proposal by the delegations of Spain and Mexico. The Delegation concluded by observing that in view of staff salaries and unity of the UN common institution, as well as administrative and financial perspectives, it believed that WIPO should proceed with the application of the latest post adjustment multipliers without undue delay.

92. The Delegation of the Russian Federation expressed its support for the proposed amendments to the ICSC Statute. The Delegation considered it helpful to specify in the decision by the WIPO Coordination Committee the request to the Director General to proceed with the use of the post adjustment multiplier in a timely manner, as established by the ICSC.

93. The Delegation of Norway aligned itself with the statement given by the Delegation of Switzerland on behalf of Group B, and also expressed its support for the statements given by the Delegations of Mexico and Spain.

94. The Delegation of Iceland expressed its support for the statement made by Group B, and the proposed amendment to the text put forward by the distinguished Delegates of Spain and Mexico.

95. As there were no further requests for the floor, the Chair gave the floor to the Director General.

96. The Director General thanked the delegations very much, and thanked all of the Groups who engaged with the Secretariat extensively, informally, as well as by making statements in the meeting. He stated that he wanted to put on record that as the Director General, he wished to affirm WIPO's support for the common system. He further affirmed that WIPO was a member of the UN family and thus he wanted to make sure that what he did in this regard was aligned with the whole UN system. He therefore was very pleased with the opportunity to do that with today's decision, and to be able to take this forward. The Director General extended his thanks once again to all Member States for their views and support.

97. The Chair proposed the following decision.

98. The WIPO Coordination Committee endorsed the amendments to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission, as provided in the annex of document WO/CC/82/3, to be notified immediately by the Director General in writing to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

99. The WIPO Coordination Committee requests the Director General to implement the official ICSC post adjustment multipliers provided after the date of the acceptance of those amendments by WIPO, consistent with its legal obligations.

[Annex follows¹]

¹ It is customary practice that the Chair allows a representative of the WIPO Staff Council to address members of the WIPO Coordination Committee after the conclusion of its agenda in order to provide the perspectives of staff. The Chair informed that he would follow the precedent set forth with the agreement of the Member States, and so he proceeded. The statement of the representative of the Staff Council is annexed to this report.

Statement by the WIPO Staff Council to the Coordination Committee of Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization
July 14, 2023, Geneva

Your Excellencies,
Mister Chair,
Director General,
Delegates and
Dear WIPO Colleagues,

It is an honor to address you today on behalf of the WIPO Staff Council. The opportunity to address the Coordination Committee at the annual General Assembly is closely watched and much anticipated by my colleagues as it is the only chance that we have, as staff, to engage directly with Member States. As such, I hope that you will consider our views and concerns and that you prioritize the staff in the context of your current and future policy-making activities.

In the past year, the WIPO Administration has made efforts to collect staff feedback via the employee engagement survey, provide opportunities for mobility and staff training, and enhance communication. The Human Resources Management Department held several general and thematic town halls and sectoral meetings to keep the staff updated on recent developments on HR-related issues, which is indicative of the will of the current Administration to remain connected with the staff body on important issues. There are still, however, key areas where the Staff Council hopes to see additional positive developments in the best interest of the staff and the Organization.

The Staff Council understands the challenges that the world is facing today, as well as the increasing number of uncertainties that also relate – among other things – to questions of digitalization, automation, workforce diversity and inclusion. We also understand the need for an agile workforce that can respond quickly to new challenges and new opportunities.

That said, the staff are this Organization's most important asset. Employees who feel heard and valued at work are much more productive and dedicated. Ensuring a positive experience for staff, and providing opportunities for growth and development, boost staff engagement and motivation. We are convinced that WIPO, through training and empowerment of its staff, can ensure both an agile workforce and a more secure working environment. We commend the measures taken by the Administration to invest in capacity development and learning, using several modalities, and encourage that these be strengthened, and made widely available on an equitable basis. Staff look forward to diversifying their skills and competencies, to be able to give more to the Organization.

The recent employee engagement survey had a staff well-being question, which asked whether WIPO takes a genuine interest in the employees' well-being. This question received one of the lowest scores, dropping 3 points lower than the already low 2022 survey result. It is our belief that numerous factors may have contributed to such a low score, e.g., a constant push to do more with less, the lack of career growth opportunities, a looming anxiety over a possible pay cut, the lack of accessible and affordable childcare options in and around Geneva, and the proposal to restrict flexible working arrangements.

In light of the above, I will outline six key areas of concern for staff, which directly affect their motivation, engagement and well-being:

The first concern relates to career aspirations, staff professional growth, and promotion.

In the area of career development, staff expectations are legitimately high. These include expectations that excellent work combined with increasing responsibilities at a higher level will be recognized and rewarded through upward career development opportunities. It is normal that staff aspire to grow and it is normal that any employer encourages and supports its staff to grow.

Currently, staff can be promoted through either an external competition or a reclassification, with the latter option limited at this time to P1 and P2 posts. The fact is that internal merit-based promotion opportunities do not exist. While we understand that reclassification is not a tool for promotion, there are posts at higher grades that ought to be reclassified according to Staff Regulation 2.2. This is affecting the morale of staff who aspired to have their posts reclassified as a result of new and higher-level responsibilities that were naturally gained over the course of time and experience. This is a matter of great importance in light of the increased demand to deliver on WIPO's objectives, including through the Medium Term Strategic Plan.

To have any chance at a promotion, staff, especially at mid and high levels, must await a vacancy announcement and undergo an open competition. Once the vacancy is advertised, staff are concerned about influences and external pressures that may arise around questions of geographical representation, fairness, bias, gender and age—all affecting the competition and in turn, our career growth prospects.

Without prejudice to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels – which of course is also needed – many sister organizations have taken concrete steps to ensure that full regard is given to qualified internal staff in filling vacancies. Many organizations such as the UNAIDS, WHO and others expressly stipulate in their Staff Regulations and Rules that everything being equal, priority is automatically given to internal candidates. Others limit the eligibility for certain posts to internal candidates, to give those who meet all the qualifications the opportunity to grow and advance in their careers.

The Staff Council would like to see concrete similar actions at WIPO, which will in turn benefit the Organization's performance, and the Member States that we serve. It is important to reassure our staff that the Organization understands their aspirations and commits to protecting their career development opportunities. We count on your support to approve the internal recruitment framework proposed by the Administration, which is in line with the practices undertaken in many UN organizations. We note that during your deliberations many Member States advocate for closer alignment with UN practices. We count on you also to apply this principle to recruitment policy.

The second concern relates to sustainable contractual status for staff

Here the Staff Council would like to raise two important topics: (1) the Fixed Term Limited Term contracts and (2) the conversion of Fixed Term Appointments to Continuing Appointments.

In 2022, the Coordination Committee approved the Fixed Term Limited Term contracts, which carry a maximum duration of 5 years, and the Administration started widely applying them to new vacancy announcements. Yet greater transparency is required as to which posts are subject to this new type of contract. WIPO staff are UN civil servants whose value lies in their institutional knowledge and tenure. Maintaining these advantages and preserving our institutional knowledge are critical for the business continuity of our specialized Organization. It is therefore important that we do not take away this important UN feature, except for posts that are created for a specific project and will only last for the duration of the project.

The second point relates to the conversion of Fixed Term Appointments to Continuing Appointments. While the conversion to Continuing Appointments is at the discretion of the Director General, we still do not have a clear understanding of the grounds on which such decisions are being made. The Staff Council is regularly approached on this topic by staff who have received unclear responses from HR. More clarity is needed so that the staff and the Council better understand the framework that applies to the granting of Continuing Appointments.

Both issues speak directly to stability and job security. We need clarity on both issues to meet aspirations and ensure people are fully engaged.

The third concern relates to inclusion, diversity and gender equity

We recognize the recent commitment to improving diversity and inclusion at WIPO. We are very keen to see the Administration redress the current imbalances in our work force to achieve balanced gender and geographical representation, and to leverage the existing talent within the Organization. This topic has been discussed at length during the Program and Budget Committee. Some outreach efforts by the Administration have already helped to increase applications from some under-represented or unrepresented countries.

Nevertheless, the imbalance remains at the P5 and higher levels. WIPO needs to address this issue not only through outreach efforts but also through an appropriate assessment of internal candidates who can help redress this imbalance by taking on higher-level responsibilities and moving to higher-graded posts. Internal upward movement also frees up posts at lower levels and should result in new openings and opportunities. Such internal upward promotion would not increase head count or counterbalance geographical distributions efforts; in fact it may result in higher grades for staff from some geographical areas that are not currently represented at P5 and higher grades.

Beyond just the numbers, fostering an enabling environment lies at the heart of achieving gender equality. The Staff Council commends the UN General Assembly's approval of the new gender-neutral parental leave policy, which went into effect on January 1 of this year. While WIPO has reformed its parental leave policy in 2021, it still falls 2 weeks short of the UN-wide parental leave policy for birthing mothers. We call on the Administration to promptly update our parental leave policy to further encourage an enabling environment at WIPO.

The fourth concern relates to Flexible Working Arrangements

WIPO's flexible working arrangements have been greatly appreciated by staff and have had a positive impact on our well-being according to overwhelming feedback received from colleagues. The views of the Staff Council are being sought on a revised teleworking policy proposal. Any changes to the current policy would need to adequately balance the positive impact of teleworking – such as improving work-life balance – while being mindful of encouraging interpersonal connection among staff within the Organization. We believe these principles can complement each other, and are ready to work with Administration on new and creative ways to increase connectivity among staff.

The fifth concern relates to the ICSC and the Geneva Post Adjustment Issue

The Staff Council is following with great concern the discussions on the Geneva post adjustment as determined by the ICSC based on the outcome of the 2021 cost-of living survey. In terms of its implementation, the Staff Council questions the legality of the outcome of the 2021 survey, since it was conducted prior to the ICSC Statute amendments – that is, when the ICSC did not have the authority to determine, by decision, post adjustment multipliers for those

organizations that are subject to the jurisdiction of the ILO Administrative Tribunal. This is apart from the questionable timing of the survey, which was conducted in the midst of the pandemic, when spending patterns were obviously not representative of normal life.

As you will recall, the ICSC methodology applied to the 2016 round of surveys was challenged by staff members across five Geneva-based agencies. The Tribunal disposed of the cases on a crucial procedural issue, finding that the ICSC lacked the authority to set post adjustment. While the Tribunal thus did not have to consider the validity of the methodology, the result shows that a review of the functioning of the ICSC itself is *greatly needed*. Such a review and ultimate reform would ward off future legal challenges from staff on ICSC methodologies that determine the level of remuneration, which is, naturally, of fundamental importance to everyone.

It goes without saying that as the price of goods continues to rise, our purchasing power continues to diminish – the very thing that the post adjustment system is designed to protect against.

The Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) has encouraged the affected Geneva-based organizations to implement the new post adjustment in a manner that would not penalize staff members.

We appeal to Member States to support WIPO staff in at minimum maintaining our post adjustment and current salaries until the Geneva pay differential gap is closed.

The sixth relates to respectful and harmonious working environment

The Staff Council attaches great importance to ensuring a safe and respectful working environment at WIPO. We will continue to engage and support the Administration in its efforts to address issues pertaining to harassment in all its forms.

In Conclusion,

WIPO must continue to invest in and support its staff. Outstanding results require outstanding people. We call on the WIPO Administration to continue its efforts to support, develop, and empower staff across the entire Organization.

In order to do so, the continuous support of all Member States is vital for WIPO to maintain a dynamic and motivated workforce and to attract the best talent.

We are thankful to the Director General and the Administration for taking into account the Staff Council's concerns and proposals. Open communication and mutual respect are key characteristics of our current relationship. We look forward to further collaborating with the Administration to enhance WIPO's reputation as an employer of choice.

The Staff Council is committed to continuing its work for the benefit of all staff, devoting our time and energy to staff concerns, with profound respect for the immense responsibility entrusted to us. We will not relent in continuing to advocate for staff career aspirations and professional growth. We will continuously urge the harmonization of contract modalities with a unified approach and clear criteria. We will persistently strive to ensure that a fair and equitable working environment and the well-being of staff will remain the top priority for all stakeholders. We are committed to seeing WIPO maintain its position as the preferred Organization for attracting and recruiting highly qualified talent while preserving, promoting and supporting the career development of committed and qualified staff already on board.

We thank you for your attention and count on your continued support to pursue our key requests and to keep the staff always in mind in all your deliberations, as they are the most important asset of this Organization.

[End of Annex and of document]