Geneva, 25 September 2026

Closing Statement of WhyWeCraft Association
on behalf of the Traditional Custodians in Țara Beiușului, Romania,
Asociația Custozii de Cunoștințe și Expresii Culturale Tradiționale din Țara Beiușului,
at the 53rd Session of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC 53)

Dear Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

I deliver this statement of WhyWeCraft Association on behalf of the traditional custodians in Țara Beiușului, Romania.

We support the statement delivered by the Indigenous Caucus.

We would also like to express our support for the Chair of the IGC and trust for the process he is weaving for driving progress in the Committee's work.

As a traditional local community maintaining a living and continuously evolving system of Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), transmitted across generations and deeply connected to our collective identity, customary practices, spirituality and relationship with our territory, we consider the beneficiaries of the legal protection discussed under this instrument to be Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities whose TK and TCEs are collectively created, nurtured and sustained in a traditional context, and are generationally transmitted in accordance with our customary laws and protocols.

The question of what is eligible for protection is particularly important to us.

It is essential that the eligibility criteria are cumulative. This is necessary both to provide clarity as to the subject matter eligible for protection and to ensure that protection is directed towards TK and TCEs that genuinely meet the conditions established under the instrument.

At the same time, the eligibility criteria must ensure that traditional custodians are not inadvertently excluded from protection. Linking the cumulative eligibility criteria to the beneficiaries of protection is therefore essential to ensure that Traditional Knowledge

and Traditional Cultural Expressions are effectively protected for the benefit of their traditional custodians.

The absence of an effective international legal framework for the protection of the TK and TCEs of traditional custodians continues to create a structural imbalance in intellectual property protection.

Third parties continue to obtain exclusive rights over manifestations derived from our TK and TCEs, while Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities lack effective protection of their rights and collective custodianship.

This imbalance must be addressed by ensuring that the protection of TK and TCEs is meaningful, effective, and accessible to the Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities who as traditional custodians have collectively created, maintained, and transmitted this knowledge and these cultural expressions across generations.

Thank you Chair