Geneva, 16 September 2026

Opening 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)

As Traditional Custodians from Țara Beiușului - *Țara Binșului* in our local dialect - 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 under negotiation to be Indigenous People as well as local communities of traditional custodians whose TK and TCEs is collectively created, nurtured and sustained in a traditional context, generationally transmitted, and linked to cultural and social identity.

We support an effective, rights-based sui-generis framework providing positive and defensive protection that fully and effectively allows us to exercise our collective, intergenerational and living custodianship, including our rights to cultural integrity, to control access to and use of our TK and TCEs, to prevent unauthorized or inappropriate uses, and to continue innovating and commercializing within our customary practices, with protection capable of enduring for as long as custodianship continues.

Finally, as legitimate beneficiaries and custodians of the TK and TCEs whose protection is being negotiated, we respectfully call for consideration of WIPO funding for facilitating meaningful participation of representatives of Traditional Custodian communities from Eastern Europe, including Țara Beiușului, in the WIPO IGC meetings and Expert Workshops, so that the lived experience, perspectives and positions of Indigenous Peoples as well as traditional custodians from all 7 socio-cultural regions of the world can be represented and directly contribute to the development of this international framework.

With care and respect,

WhyWeCraft Association
on behalf of Asociația Custozii de Cunoștințe și Expresii Culturale Tradiționale din Țara Beiușului (*Association of TK and TCEs Custodians in Țara Beiușului*)