



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement by Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan, at the 59th Series of Meetings of WIPO Assemblies, Geneva 30 September 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Pakistan would like to felicitate you for assuming stewardship of the General Assemblies (GA). We acknowledge the work of Secretariat for excellent arrangements. We hope that our collective work during this year's GA would help us achieve the consensual outcomes. We align ourselves with the statement made by Singapore on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group.

Mr. Chairman,

The General Assembly has a number of important items on its agenda this year. My delegation shall be expressing itself on these items in the coming days. Today, I would like to briefly share my delegation's views on a few of the key issues that the Assembly shall be addressing.

The process of the election of the new Director General of WIPO shall be initiated by this Assembly. This is an important matter both in procedure and substance. On procedure the electorate of the election i.e. coordination committee suffers a challenge of its membership from Asia Pacific Group which remains underrepresented. On substance the process should be transparent and should ensure strict neutrality of the Secretariat.

The WIPO continues to face challenges in two core areas of its work – norm setting and technical cooperation. Firstly, on norm setting, we are clearly not keeping pace with fast evolving technological and economic developments. International protection of Traditional Knowledge,

Genetic Resources and Traditional Cultural Expressions continues to elude us despite over a decade of deliberations. Modernization of the patent regime remains stalled. And even ostensibly procedural instruments such as the Design Law Treaty remain mired in interminable discussions.

Lack of agreement on norms setting does not bode well for WIPO and, more generally, for a rules based international economic system. There is a need to break the normative logjam. At a basic level two things are required.

In certain areas, especially patents, a fuller understanding of the relevant issues is needed. The Secretariat has a key role to play in un-packaging the many complex issues, and especially in identifying the possible developmental implications of various proposals. In other areas, such as Genetic Resources (GR), Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE) where extensive negotiations have already been held, it is time for member states to demonstrate the necessary political will to move towards a productive conclusion of legally binding instrument.

Secondly, on technical cooperation, we are aware that the demands on the Organization far exceed available resources. This makes it necessary to utilize given resources in a manner that these yield maximal impact. For this, four principles need to be adhered to. One, programs must be demand driven. The specific needs of countries, as articulated by them, should be addressed rather than delivering some preconceived, generic activities to them. Two, the available resources should be spread equitably and not be directed to selected countries and sub-regions. Three, there should be focused, targeted interventions; organizing large events that may have a dubious visibility function, but do little to improve the situation on ground, should be avoided. Four, while allocating resources priority must be given to areas where there is maximum demand.

We also look forward advancement on important institutional questions concerning the composition of Coordination Committee and of the Program and Budget Committee at this GA. If we are unable to address the actual requirements of Member States and stakeholders, whether in the normative area or on capacity building, then they shall seek solutions elsewhere. It is imperative that we take concrete decisions on matters of real importance in this Assembly. Only then shall we be able to demonstrate the continuing relevance and centrality of this Organization on intellectual property matters.

Mr. Chairman,

A key area where there is high demand is to build capacity for the use of IP to foster innovation. WIPO proclaims itself as the "Innovation Organization". We have even been told (in a PBC session earlier this year) that WIPO's role in innovation is comparable to WHO's role in the field of health. This is encouraging but somewhat simplistic ascertain, Innovation is a very broad area encompassing a wide array of issues, many of which are beyond the remit of WIPO such as industrial, taxation, fiscal, procurement and education policies.

WIPO's mandate is to focus on the IP aspects of innovation, that is, to assist countries in establishing, and utilizing, IP norms and institutions to promote innovation. Regrettably, the Organization is not adequately geared to effectively implement even this narrower mandate. We therefore, urge to have a dedicated unit of innovation.

This would make it easy for Member States to obtain integrated advice, and assist WIPO in offering comprehensive and well coordinated programs on IP and innovation.

A good initiative at CDIP was taken on Women in innovation and entrepreneurship. Pakistan as one of the participants would like to see building upon the recommendations of the project to enhance role of female innovators in using IP system.

Mr. Chairman,

In view of dealing with the challenges that WIPO is facing, its high time to avoid unnecessary distractions that divert member states' attention from substantive issues. A prime example is the issue of External Offices. Coupled with the problem of lack of vision document and cost and Benefit analysis through external sources, EOs has taken an inordinate amount of the time and energy of delegations. It is difficult to make the case that a small, highly technical Organization like WIPO requires an extensive field presence. WIPO is not UNHCR, or WHO, or FAO - organizations that are required to mount major field operations and, hence, need a network of field offices. We trust that the forthcoming review of WIPO's existing external offices will help clarify matters, including on the need, value addition and viability of these offices.

We strongly recommend that further decisions on external offices should await the outcome of this planned review. We should desist from issues that don't add value to the organization's work and only result in divisive debate.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan stands ready to contribute constructively to the successful conclusion of this General Assembly.

I thank you.
