



**South Centre Statement to the Fifty-Seventh Series of Meetings of the
Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO**

3 October 2017

Mr. President,

For the past 15 years the South Centre has participated in the WIPO Assemblies as an accredited observer. We recognize important advances made, most notably the adoption of the WIPO Development Agenda and the conclusion of the Marrakesh Treaty.

The South Centre wishes the WIPO Assemblies much success in the deliberations. In particular, we look forward to a decision concerning the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions (IGC) that will lead to the prompt conclusion of international legal instruments in relation to intellectual property, genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. We also hope that Members of WIPO will reach consensus on the Program and Budget for the 2018/19 biennium, retaining the principle of financial solidarity among WIPO Unions.

The South Centre is an intergovernmental organization of developing countries with 54 member States across Africa, Asia, Central and Latin America. The South Centre provides technical assistance and institutional and policy support to developing countries and least developing countries. In the area of innovation, the South Centre works to enhance national technological capacity and technology transfer for accelerating industrialization and driving job creation in the current context of technological change, as well as to respond to pressing challenges in the areas of health, food security and climate change.

The United Nations Agenda 2030 is the universal roadmap to achieve sustainable development. Coherence among national policies in various areas, including intellectual property, is necessary for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. In this regard, WIPO, as part of the United Nations system, must re-align its work with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The mandate of WIPO is derived from its convention as well as by its agreement with the United Nations. This must remain a shared understanding and a principle for the work in the organization, including the mainstreaming of the WIPO Development Agenda recommendations.

The 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of innovation. A conducive global environment for innovation is one in which the institutional and policy frameworks and incentive mechanisms, such as intellectual property rights, are aligned to meet the needs and challenges of society. WIPO would do well to expand its work on promoting innovation to cover other incentive mechanisms and models of innovation that are relevant in the twenty-first century.

Moreover, WIPO should continue to work towards an inclusive and flexible international intellectual property system that appropriately balances private interests with the public interest, and that provides sufficient policy space for countries to craft suitable national intellectual property regimes.

In addition to supporting national IP office infrastructure and capacity development, WIPO should exert leadership in supporting countries, especially developing countries and LDCs, on the use of flexibilities, including limitations and exceptions for the grant, exercise and enforcement of intellectual property rights. This requires that WIPO continue to increase its technical assistance activities, resources and practical tools for guidance on the use of flexibilities.

WIPO member States should refrain from plurilateral and bilateral trade and investment agreements that impose restrictive intellectual property obligations. WIPO should lead the United Nations system in denouncing coercive external political and economic pressure used to restrain countries from making use of the flexibilities in the IP system, as suggested by the United Nations Secretary General's High Level Panel on Access to Medicines.

WIPO also needs to devise clear guidelines to frame its partnerships with private parties, to avoid potential conflicts of interest and to maintain the member-driven nature of the organization.

The South Centre warmly invites all WIPO members and observers to a side event on the WIPO Development Agenda on 4 October in Room B.