

Building Up a Balanced Global Intellectual Property System: Report of the WIPO Assemblies' Sixty-sixth Series of Meetings

This report reviews the key discussions and outcomes of the 66th Series of Meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Assemblies held in July 2025. The Assemblies addressed important governance, oversight, and norm-setting issues. Key developments included the launch of the process to appoint a new Director General, decisions on committee compositions and approval of the 2026/27 Program and Budget. Developing countries advocated for more inclusive participation in governance, balanced priority setting on norm-setting work, and stronger implementation of the Development Agenda.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Assemblies involve the meetings of 22 Assemblies¹ and other bodies of WIPO². The following is a report of some of the issues discussed during the 66th Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies held from 8 to 17 July 2025 of relevance to developing countries.

I. Appointment of the Director General in 2026

The current Director General of WIPO, Mr. Daren Tang, will complete his term on September 30, 2026. In preparation for appointing his successor, the WIPO Secretariat issued document A/66/4 to outline the legal and procedural steps for the nomination and appointment process, based on the WIPO Convention and revised procedures adopted in 1998 and amended in 2019. The Coordination Committee is responsible for nominating a candidate, with the final appointment to be made by the General Assembly (GA) and the Assemblies of the Paris and Berne Unions. The process begins with a circular inviting Member States to submit candidates by October 24, 2025, followed by a nomination session in February 2026 and a formal appointment session in April 2026.

The Assemblies approved the timeline and process for nominations and the 2026 appointment session. The Assemblies took note of the draft circular by the Chair of the Coordination

¹ Draft Consolidated Agenda for the WIPO Assemblies 66th Series of Meetings, A/66/1 Prov.3, June 19, 2025.

² These are the following: WIPO General Assembly, WIPO Conference, WIPO Coordination Committee, Paris Union Assembly, Paris Union Executive Committee, Berne Union Assembly, Berne Union Executive Committee, Madrid Union Assembly, Hague Union Assembly, Nice Union Assembly, Lisbon Union Assembly, Locarno Union Assembly, International Patent Classification Union Assembly, Patent Cooperation Treaty Union Assembly, Budapest Union Assembly, Vienna Union Assembly, WIPO Copyright Treaty Assembly, WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty Assembly, Patent Law Treaty Assembly, Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks Assembly, the Marrakesh Treaty Assembly, and the Beijing Treaty Assembly.

Committee to WIPO Member States inviting proposals of candidates for the post of Director General. The Assemblies also approved the convening of the WIPO General Assembly, the Paris Union Assembly and the Berne Union Assembly on April 21, 2026 and the timeline of procedural steps proposed in accordance with the Procedures for the Nomination and Appointment of Directors General of WIPO as approved by the WIPO General Assembly in 2019.

Member States will begin to hold internal consultations to identify and assess potential candidates for nomination, ensuring proposals are submitted by the October 24, 2025 deadline. In doing so, it will be important for Member States to ensure that nominated candidates not only possess strong international and diplomatic credentials but also demonstrate a clear commitment to WIPO's Development Agenda (DA) and can lead WIPO with transparency, equity, and a strong orientation toward global development priorities. This includes advancing balanced and inclusive intellectual property (IP) systems that support innovation, creativity, and economic growth across all regions, particularly in developing and least developed countries.

II. Composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee, and of the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions

At the Sixty-Sixth Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies, the Paris Union Assembly elected 41 States to serve as ordinary members of its Executive Committee for the term ending at the next ordinary session in 2027. In accordance with Article 14(1) of the Paris Convention, the Executive Committee is comprised of one-fourth of the current 178 Paris Union member States i.e., 44 States. To ensure rotation and broader participation, no more than 27 of the 44 elected States were eligible to be selected from the 40 States currently serving on the Committee, as only two-thirds of the outgoing members may be re-elected. Similarly, the Berne Union Assembly was invited to elect one-fourth of its 181 member States—i.e. 45 States—as ordinary members of its own Executive Committee under Article 14(1) of the Berne Convention, following the same rules on re-election. However, only 40 States were elected to the Executive Committee of the Berne Union.

Members elected to the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions automatically become members of the WIPO Coordination Committee, which plays a central role in the governance of the Organization, including the nomination of the Director General. In addition to these elected members, the Coordination Committee includes one *ex officio* member—Switzerland, as the host country of WIPO—and one ad hoc member elected by the WIPO Conference from among States that are not members of either the Paris or Berne Unions. Somalia was elected as ad hoc member of the Coordination Committee.

Following these elections, the WIPO Coordination Committee till the 2027 Assemblies will be comprised of 83 members. Hence, the Coordination Committee will continue to operate below the required number of 88 Member States. The Assemblies mandated the Chair of the WIPO General Assembly to undertake consultations with Member States on the allocation of the vacant seats at the WIPO Assemblies in 2027, for the election of the composition of the WIPO Coordination Committee, and of the Paris and Berne Unions Executive Committees, at the same WIPO Assemblies.

The election of Executive Committee members was an opportunity to enhance equity and representativeness within the WIPO Coordination Committee. Historically, when WIPO was established, the majority of States party to the Paris and Berne Unions were developed countries, resulting in a Coordination Committee composition that disproportionately reflected developed country interests. Although developing countries have increasingly acceded to the Paris and Berne Unions over the years, this shift has not been fully mirrored in the Committee's makeup. Notably, since 2011, five seats in the Coordination Committee have remained vacant, and their allocation has not been adjusted to account for the evolving membership landscape. The Asia and the Pacific Group (APG) had proposed that these five unfilled seats be allocated in a way that better reflects current WIPO membership and the relative size of regional groups. Their proposal highlighted the underrepresentation of the African Group, the Asia and the Pacific Group, and the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS), calling for a more proportionate and inclusive composition.

However, the Assemblies decided to maintain the status quo and missed the opportunity to achieve representational equity with regional balance through enhanced representation of underrepresented countries in the Coordination Committee.

III. Composition of the Program and Budget Committee

The WIPO Program and Budget Committee (PBC) is a key subsidiary body of the General Assembly responsible for overseeing financial, budgetary, and administrative matters. PBC members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The current membership comprised of 53 members (including Switzerland as an *ex officio* member), elected in July 2023, concluded its mandate at the end of the 58th session of the General Assembly in July 2025. Accordingly, the General Assembly was invited to elect new members to the PBC for the period from July 2025 to July 2027. The General Assembly elected 52 members to the PBC, continuing with its current composition of 53 members.

Nothing in the mandate of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) restricts its composition to 53 Member States, yet this has become an established practice. Developing countries, particularly those in the Asia and the Pacific Group, have repeatedly raised concerns about the lack of equitable representation within the PBC. As noted in the Group's formal proposal ([WO/GA/49/20](#)), the current allocation of seats does not reflect the actual size or growth of regional groupings within WIPO membership. Despite expansions in 2003 and 2007, the seat distribution has remained static since then, leading to an underrepresentation of larger developing country groups such as the African Group, the Asia and the Pacific Group, and the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC).

The composition of the PBC should be revisited to ensure that it fairly reflects current WIPO membership proportions. One possible step is to expand the number of seats or adjust the allocation among regional groups based on updated membership data. The decisions of the PBC affect all WIPO Members, and its composition should allow inclusive participation and equal opportunity for all regions to influence budgetary and governance matters. A more representative PBC would strengthen the legitimacy and transparency of WIPO's decision-making processes.

IV. Program, Budget and Oversight Matters

IV.1 Reports on Audit and Oversight

IV.1.1 Report by the Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC)

The IAOC's report was noted by the General Assembly. Key issues included progress in audit quality and cybersecurity, but concerns remain around underperformance of the evaluation function. Recommendation: Implement the Management Action Plan to strengthen evaluation independence and visibility.

IV.1.2 Report by the External Auditor

The External Auditor confirmed WIPO's financial statements and recommended improving consolidated reporting, adjusting accounting for Madrid fees, and tackling trademark backlogs. Further suggestions included better Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and stakeholder engagement mechanisms.

IV.1.3 Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD)

The IOD report focused on audits and strategic plan implementation. While activities were generally positive, gaps remained in gender mainstreaming and Development Agenda coverage. Suggestion: Demand more explicit integration of DA priorities and gender equity in evaluations.

IV.2 Report on the Program and Budget Committee (PBC)

The Program and Budget Committee (PBC) had held its 38th and 39th sessions in May and June 2025, respectively, and submitted its report and list of decisions to the WIPO General Assembly through documents A/66/7 and A/66/9. These sessions covered a wide range of governance and planning matters for the Organization, including the review of the WIPO Performance Report for 2024, progress on the implementation of Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations, and a first review of the proposed Program of Work and Budget for the 2026/27 biennium.

The PBC had welcomed WIPO's positive financial performance and noted improvements in program delivery and audit quality. It had requested revisions to the proposed Program of Work and Budget to reflect Member State input, including adjustments to key performance indicators, multilingualism, and evaluation frameworks. The Committee also agreed to continue discussions on unresolved issues such as funding for Indigenous Peoples' participation and the methodology for allocating income and expenditure by Union. Additionally, the PBC requested the Secretariat to draft terms of reference for the upcoming evaluation of WIPO's external offices and emphasized the importance of cost efficiency, risk-based oversight, and a strengthened evaluation function.

The PBC discussions on key issues—such as transparency, development integration, Indigenous participation, multilingualism, and technical assistance—had largely ended in deferrals or deadlocks. A core structural shift in WIPO's budget presentation, moving from a

31-program format to an 8-sector model, drew ongoing concern from Member States including China, Brazil, and Canada, who pressed for greater detail on internal fund transfers. The Secretariat had defended the model as efficient but made no immediate concessions, offering instead continued dialogue.

A particularly divisive issue in the PBC discussions leading up to the WIPO Assemblies was the role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in WIPO's 2026/2027 Program and Budget. The United States (US) had requested the removal of all SDG-related references, arguing they distort WIPO's IP-focused mandate and misrepresent its strategic framework. In contrast, a wide range of countries—including Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, and a several developed countries—had defended the inclusion of SDGs as consistent with WIPO's role as a United Nations (UN) agency. They emphasized that SDG framing enhances transparency, global alignment, and support for development outcomes without altering WIPO's core functions. In light of the disagreement, the PBC referred the US proposal, along with other unresolved matters—including Lisbon System financing, and the references to the Development Acceleration Fund—to the 66th WIPO Assemblies for further consideration.

During the discussions in the Assemblies, developing countries supported the establishment of the Development Acceleration Fund, and opposed the US proposal to remove all references to SDGs. The US continued to object to references to SDGs stating that WIPO is not mandated to carry out development work or advancing the SDGs but is only mandated to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world. The US also reiterated its objection to the increasing deficit of the Lisbon Union and suggested that the revenue estimates of the Lisbon Union must be based on the estimates of WIPO's Chief Economist rather than that of the Lisbon Registry, which the US described as "inflated" estimates. The US also objected to increasing the budget of the Lisbon Union even as its revenue projections showed a decrease. The US described the Development Acceleration Fund as "an inappropriate expansion of WIPO's development related technical assistance projects without any oversight from member States."

The WIPO Assemblies took note of the "List of Decisions adopted by the Program and Budget Committee"(document A/66/6); and approved the recommendations made by the PBC.

The WIPO Assemblies also approved the proposed Program of Work and Budget for 2026/27 (document A/66/9), following agreement by the Assemblies to change the name of the "Development Acceleration Fund" proposed in document A/66/9 to "Innovation, Creativity and Development Acceleration Program". With regard to projects to be funded by this program, the Assemblies requested the WIPO secretariat to develop criteria for projects that are linked to WIPO's expected results, with a focus on piloting new and innovative ideas and not overlapping with other ongoing projects and initiatives across WIPO, with comprehensive reporting of the projects in each WIPO Performance Report.

V. WIPO Committees and International Normative Framework

V.1 Report on the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR)

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights and directed the SCCR to continue its work on the agenda items.

The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) has long focused on two long-standing agenda items: the Treaty for the Protection of Broadcast Organizations (since 1998) and Limitations and Exceptions for libraries, archives, museums, education, research, and persons with disabilities (since 2004, SCCR/12/3).

On the **protection of Broadcasting Organizations**, there is consensus on addressing signal piracy but divergent views on (1) whether the text for a new treaty for protection of broadcasting organizations should follow a signal-based model (i.e. with flexibility to prohibit piracy by any means, such as in the Brussels Convention Relating to the Distribution of Programme-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite) or through granting of exclusive rights to broadcasters (Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations model, draft Broadcast Treaty Articles 6-9); (2) whether its scope should remain limited to traditional broadcasting or include webcasting; (3) the scope of limitations and exceptions, and other issues (such as definitions, national treatment, etc.). The 2006 GA mandated that the Broadcasting Treaty be “confined to the protection of broadcasting and cablecasting organizations in the traditional sense” and “based on a signal-based approach” ([WO/GA/33/10](#), para. 107, 2006). The 2007 General Assembly Mandate established that in order to make a recommendation for a diplomatic conference (last treaty making step in WIPO) there should be sufficient “agreement on objectives, specific scope and object of protection” ([WO/GA/34/16](#)).

Key issues are to balance signal-based approaches with rights-based proposals, define clearly and narrowly the scope of protection, and ensure adequate limitations and exceptions.

Discussions in the 46th session of the SCCR in April 2025 were based on the Chair’s Draft WIPO Broadcasting Organizations Treaty [SCCR/46/3](#). While the European Union (EU) advocated for a streamlined treaty focused on anti-piracy that includes exclusive rights, numerous developing countries reiterated concerns over the potential overreach of such rights. Proposals from the EU to include protections for Internet-based transmissions and expanded post-fixation rights were viewed by many developing countries as incompatible with their development needs and regulatory flexibility, though positions of some developing countries diverged on the degree of emphasis on issues such as Internet transmissions, and exceptions and limitations, reflecting diverse national contexts rather than fundamental disagreement. Significantly, the US diverged from the EU position and remained one of the strongest opponents to the treaty. The US pushed for a minimalist treaty granting only the right to authorize retransmissions of linear broadcasts, opposing broader rights such as fixation and rights over stored programmes post-fixation.

Developing countries highlighted that the treaty should be narrowly focused on a signal-based approach, and the need to include in the text mandatory limitations and exceptions, especially for uses of content permitted by copyright and for other public interests protected by the Rome and Brussels Conventions.

The African Group indicated that it would not support advancing the broadcasting treaty to a Diplomatic Conference without parallel progress on a limitations and exceptions instrument, reinforcing its call for a balanced approach across the SCCR’s agenda.

The final SCCR conclusions on the topic of the protection of broadcasting organizations reflect the fact that the negotiation text is not mature enough and there is still no agreement for final

negotiations at a Diplomatic Conference, therefore the SCCR will continue discussing the matter with an updated Chairs text in its 47th session.

The Asia and the Pacific Group (APG) reaffirmed support for the conclusion of a fair and inclusive broadcasting treaty. Group B emphasized the importance of progress on the treaty with a view to addressing the legal use of programmes carrying signals and stressed the need for allocating sufficient time for discussions on this matter in the SCCR. The Group of Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) also supported advancing towards the conclusion of the Broadcasting Treaty, stressing that it should adequately reflect the technological realities of the 21st century and ensure appropriate and effective protection against signal piracy. This view was also echoed by the European Union. The CEBS group also stressed that the treaty should be future-oriented, meet the current needs of broadcasting organizations, and accommodate challenges posed by the digital environment and rapid technological developments. The group reiterated its expectation of a treaty that provides equal protection for transmissions over computer networks and prevents signal piracy. The African Group stressed on the importance of the discussions on the Broadcasting Treaty and limitations and exceptions moving together. This was supported by Algeria. The US stated that the scope of the Broadcasting Treaty should be focused on a signal-based approach to provide traditional broadcasting organizations with a single exclusive right to authorize simultaneous retransmission to the public of their linear broadcasting signals. The US suggested that such an approach would leave countries free to provide additional protection rights under their national laws. The US observed that the current draft text exceeds the General Assembly mandate by providing a new exclusive right of fixation that protects signals used to transmit to the public stored programmes.

It is noteworthy that there is convergence among Member States on prevention of signal piracy with regard to the Broadcasting Treaty, but there are differences on fixation and post-fixation rights. It remains to be seen whether the SCCR agrees to focus on the areas of convergence or continues to grapple with issues on which Member States continue to differ.

On **copyright limitations and exceptions (L&Es)**, the key issue is reaching an agreement to begin text-based work. The 2012 GA mandated the Committee to work toward an “appropriate international legal instrument or instruments (whether model law, joint recommendation, treaty and/or other forms)” on uses by libraries, archives, museums, educational and research institutions, and persons with other disabilities ([WO/GA/41/14](#)). In SCCR 43, the Committee adopted a Work Program ([SCCR/43/8](#)) to draft “objectives, principles, and options” for potential instruments. At SCCR 44, the African Group presented a Draft Proposal for the Implementation of the Work Program on Exceptions and Limitations ([SCCR/44/6](#)), including a specific process for drafting objectives, principles, and options. SCCR 44 concluded with a decision that the WIPO secretariat should draft a proposed implementation plan. But an implementation plan proposed for discussion in the 45th session of the SCCR by the secretariat emphasized work on tool kits and did not propose beginning consideration of international legally binding instruments. SCCR 45 concluded with a call for the secretariat to take comments on a revised draft implementation plan ([SCCR/45/10 PROV](#)).

Developing countries expressed in the SCCR 46th session that the SCCR should set a process to undertake text-based work on L&Es, which Group B opposed. As a compromise, the Chair of the SCCR worked on a decision, agreed on the following terms:

- The SCCR will continue its discussions based on the 2012 General Assembly mandate and the Work Program on Limitations and Exceptions adopted in 2023 (SCCR/43/8 Rev).
- The Committee will use, in a complementary manner, all relevant documents available, including inputs made during SCCR/46.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair will prepare a document with concrete suggestions for implementation of the Work Program, seeking common ground for consideration at the next session. This proposal received support from all regional groups, with Group B reserving final confirmation.
- While no intersessional work is planned, the Chair and Vice-Chair will remain open to receiving inputs from Member States.

During the 2025 General Assembly, developing countries strongly supported normative work for development of an international legal instrument or instruments on limitations and exceptions. The APG stressed that limitations and exceptions are essential for enabling inclusive access to knowledge, education and culture, especially in developing countries. The African Group specifically called for the beginning of text-based negotiations for an international legal instrument on limitations and exceptions for libraries, archives, museums, education and research. However, the EU clearly opposed any work towards an international legally binding instrument.

On **copyright and the Digital Environment**, one of the discussion points is whether it should be a standing agenda item in SCCR. This agenda item seeks to address contemporary challenges, including artist remuneration in streaming and the implications of artificial intelligence (AI). GRULAC proposed a Draft Work Plan on Copyright in the Digital Environment ([SCCR/45/4](#)), calling for structured studies and discussions on fair remuneration for artists and transparency in digital platforms, AI's impact on copyright, and imbalances in negotiations between creators and digital service providers. During the 2025 General Assembly Ecuador on behalf of GRULAC expressed the group's particular interest in discussions connected with copyright and the digital environment. The CEBS Group also expressed willingness to engage constructively on these matters. The EU stated that achieving tangible progress on the draft broadcasting treaty and the limitations and exceptions should be a priority before adding any new permanent agenda item.

Other agenda items with less discussion concerned artists' resale rights, public lending rights, and rights of theatre directors. Several countries supported including the topic of artists' resale rights for discussion in the SCCR agenda. Several countries also supported the proposal by Cote d'Ivoire for a study on the rights of audiovisual authors and their remuneration for the exploitation of their works.

While there is agreement to continue to work on all agenda items, the priorities and expected outcomes among Member States on various issues of the agenda are divergent. The work towards an international legal instrument on copyright limitations and exceptions on uses by libraries, archives, museums, educational and research institutions, and persons with other disabilities must be advanced, as it has hit a roadblock in the past sessions. The text negotiations on both the Broadcasting Treaty and on copyright limitations and exceptions should advance in parallel. This will require that developed countries agree to text-based negotiations for an

international legal instrument on copyright limitations and exceptions. It is also important to advance the work on copyright in the digital environment.

V.2 Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP)

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the SCP.

The WIPO General Assembly discussed the report of the thirty-sixth session of the SCP which was held in the period following the previous session of the General Assembly.

As in previous years, the SCP continued discussions toward defining the process for arriving at a work program for the SCP. Discussions were focused on the following topics: (i) Exceptions and Limitations to Patent Rights; (ii) Quality of Patents, including Opposition Systems; (iii) Patents and Health; (iv) Confidentiality of Communications between Clients and their Patent Advisors; and (v) Transfer of Technology. Since the nineteenth session of the SCP there had been no progress on these issues currently on the agenda of the SCP.

These topics continue to be the basis of the committee's work. However, the issue of AI and patents has risen as a de facto new core of the work.

No decision or guidance was required from the General Assembly with respect to the report as it summarized the current work of the SCP.

Exceptions and Limitations to Patent Rights: Broad consensus supported continued analysis of legal frameworks on patent exceptions, especially those related to the extemporaneous preparation of medicines. Several delegations welcomed the SCP's draft reference document (SCP/36/3) as a useful tool for identifying best practices and policy objectives in this area. While developed countries emphasized the stability and narrow application of exceptions to maintain patent incentives, developing countries pushed for broader application of exceptions to support public health systems and ensure access to essential medicines.

Quality of Patents including Opposition Systems: There was strong alignment among Member States on the importance of high-quality patents and the role of opposition systems in maintaining the integrity of the patent system. Several Member States underscored the need for transparent, efficient patent granting procedures, particularly in the context of emerging technologies like AI. However, differences emerged over substantive law harmonization, with the EU and the US advocating greater alignment of national practices, while developing countries preferred a more flexible, context-sensitive approach that preserves national policy space.

Patents and Health: Many delegations expressed support for enhanced transparency on the legal status of pharmaceutical patents and recognized the importance of flexibilities under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) in promoting equitable access to medicines. Developed countries reaffirmed the sufficiency of existing international rules, emphasizing voluntary licensing and innovation incentives. In contrast, developing countries called for stronger use and understanding of patent flexibilities, citing pandemic-related constraints. Some observer organizations urged the SCP to take more assertive action to overcome barriers created by patent regimes, especially in light of rising inequality and unmet health needs.

Confidentiality of Communications between Clients and their Patent Advisors: Several developed countries supported advancing discussions on minimum standards for client–patent advisor privilege, especially in cross-border litigation. On the other hand, developing countries favoured more information exchange before considering harmonization.

Transfer of Technology: Member States acknowledged the centrality of transfer of technology to achieving inclusive innovation and sustainable development. There was strong support for continued experience-sharing on mechanisms that facilitate transfer of technology—especially between universities, research institutions, and industry—and the use of AI tools to support patent workflows and knowledge dissemination. However, there were clear differences between developed and developing countries over the means and priorities for achieving effective transfer of technology. Developed countries such as EU, Japan and US focus on voluntary partnerships market-driven licensing models and strategic collaboration as the preferred tools to facilitate transfer of technology. Developing countries, on the other hand, emphasized systemic barriers they face in accessing technologies. They called for more structured international support, including technical assistance, capacity-building, and the use of TRIPS flexibilities.

In sum, developed countries have been keen to limit the discussions in the SCP to only a few issues that relate to patent law harmonization. While advancing on the basis of studies on each of the issues of the non-exhaustive list of issues is a good way to broaden the SCP discussions to issues of interest to developing countries, such as transfer of technology through the patent system, anti-competitive practices and problems concerning patents and standards, more concrete action-oriented work programs need to be adopted particularly on exceptions and limitations. In this context, it is critical to ensure that SCP discussions are conducted in accordance with the recommendations adopted by the Member States on the WIPO Development Agenda on the basis of a deep understanding of the impact of the patent system on development concerns, the use and adequacy of existing flexibilities of the patent system to address these concerns, and further elaboration of the same.

It is also important for developing countries to **regularly take stock** of whether the current process is helping the SCP to advance towards establishing a concrete, balanced and consensus-based work plan for the SCP in the mid-term. It is reasonable to expect that the SCP will progressively move towards **identifying areas of common interest on which Member States may wish to negotiate an international solution**. Developing countries will need to collectively reflect upon the type of specific outputs that they wish the SCP to undertake in the mid-term and plan ahead of time how to articulate in a coordinated and convincing manner their demands in the SCP. Developing countries will also need to regularly assess and **ensure that the activities of the SCP are in line with the implementation of the Development Agenda**. There is currently no reporting on how the activities of the SCP are supporting such implementation, which contradicts the existing mandate in that respect.

V.3 Report on the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT)

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the SCT.

The WIPO Secretariat reported to the General Assembly on the forty-eighth session of the SCT that was held in March 2025.

The session focused on ongoing work in three key areas: trademarks, industrial designs, and geographical indications.

In the area of trademarks, the Committee continued discussions on proposals related to the protection of country names and geographical names of national significance, both in general and within the domain name system (DNS). Several revised and updated proposals—including from Jamaica and a group of co-sponsoring countries—will remain on the agenda for further discussion at the next session. The SCT also reviewed a proposal from Ecuador and Peru on nation brands, building on an extensive survey of national practices.

For industrial designs, the SCT discussed an updated joint recommendation on protecting graphical user interface (GUI) designs, supported by several high-income economies, as well as a study proposal from the African Group on the impact of GUI protection on innovation. Further consultation on both texts will continue at the next session. The Committee also reviewed progress in the implementation of the Digital Access Service (DAS) for industrial designs.

In relation to geographical indications (GIs), the SCT agreed to hold an information session at its next meeting on inclusive governance of GIs, sustainability, and plant names. It also hosted two information sessions during the current session on the value of GIs and their recognition in domain name dispute procedures. The Committee invited further topic suggestions for its 50th session. Overall, the SCT advanced technical discussions but left key policy proposals open for continued negotiation.

There was broad consensus on the importance of the SCT's work in all three thematic areas—trademarks, industrial designs, and geographical indications. Delegations from both developed and developing countries expressed appreciation for the Committee's progress, particularly its focus on new challenges in digital innovation and global trade. GUI (Graphical User Interface) design protection emerged as a key area of common interest. Many countries recognized the relevance of protecting digital designs in the modern economy and expressed interest in continuing discussions on the joint recommendation concerning GUI protection. Countries like the United States, Japan, the European Union, and Korea advocated for its adoption, arguing that it would harmonize practices and provide clarity for innovators, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, developing countries—led by the African Group, South Africa, Brazil, and India—called for a more cautious approach. They stressed the need for a thorough study on the impact of such protection on innovation in lower-income economies, where enabling environments are less developed.

In the area of trademarks, discussions around the protection of country names and geographical names of national significance showed significant alignment on principles but divergence on implementation. Most delegations agreed on the need to prevent the misleading use of these names, particularly in the domain name system (DNS). Proposals aimed at preventing the delegation of country names as top-level domains found wide support. However, views diverged on the scope and legal framing. Some developed countries, including Korea and others in Group B, emphasized that current national trademark systems already provide sufficient safeguards. In contrast, many developing countries, particularly from GRULAC and

the African region, argued for stronger multilateral instruments to address misuse and to safeguard national identities online.

The debate around nation brands further underscored this divide. Ecuador and Peru introduced a proposal that framed nation brands as strategic assets requiring specific protection. GRULAC countries supported this view, highlighting the role of nation brands in cultural identity, tourism, and trade. In contrast, several developed countries, including the EU and CEBS Group members, while recognizing the value of nation brands, considered that existing legal frameworks—particularly trademark law and Article 6ter of the Paris Convention—were sufficient. They expressed hesitation to move toward a new legal instrument before reaching a shared understanding of the concept and its implications.

Geographical indications remained a unifying topic, particularly in relation to the value they offer rural communities and local economies. Developing countries placed strong emphasis on GIs as tools for sustainable development, cultural preservation, and product differentiation. They welcomed upcoming information sessions on inclusive governance and the intersection between plant names and GIs. Developed countries, including the EU, also showed strong support for continued dialogue and knowledge-sharing in this area. The mutual interest in enhancing understanding and best practices helped bridge some of the more technical divides.

V.4 Report on the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) and Review of the Implementation of the Development Agenda Recommendations

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the CDIP.

The summaries by the Chair of the thirty-third and thirty-fourth sessions of the Committee, and the Director General's Report on the Implementation of the Development Agenda, contained in document CDIP/34/2, constituted the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

CDIP is in charge of following up the implementation of the WIPO Development Agenda (DA) recommendations and ensuring its mainstreaming across WIPO bodies. Its work includes approval and follow up of activities and projects as part of the implementation of the WIPO DA recommendations. Thus, much of its work is dedicated to considering proposals, discussing progress reports of projects under implementation, and evaluations of projects already undertaken.

The CDIP continued its mandate to monitor the implementation of WIPO's Development Agenda and to ensure that development considerations are fully integrated into the Organization's activities. The 33rd session reviewed progress on various development-oriented projects and examined an Independent External Review of WIPO's technical assistance, which identified areas for strengthening alignment with country needs and improving effectiveness. The session laid the groundwork for continued discussion on recommendations needing further consideration and those already reflected in ongoing WIPO activities.

The 34th session discussed WIPO's technical assistance, capacity-building efforts, and the International Conference on IP and Development, which focused on global public health. The session also reviewed WIPO's contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), approved a revised project on festival tourism and IP, and scheduled future thematic topics such as the role of IP in digital-era, creative industries, socio-economic development, and IP

education. Discussions on women and IP, judicial capacity-building, and SME support were also undertaken. While constructive dialogue continued, many issues—including finalizing responses to the technical assistance review—were deferred to upcoming sessions, reflecting the Committee’s role as a space for evolving multilateral engagement on IP and development.

The discussions at the WIPO General Assembly on the report of the CDIP reflected broad support for the DA, yet exposed underlying divergences between developed and developing countries regarding the direction and implementation of development-oriented IP policy. Developed countries emphasized a results-oriented, project-based approach focused on IP acquisition, commercialization, and innovation promotion, particularly through support for SMEs, women, and youth. They welcomed the approval of new DA projects and praised WIPO’s role in building technical capacity.

Developing countries, on the other hand, consistently called for a more holistic and structural integration of the DA across all of WIPO’s work. Delegations from the African Group, APG, GRULAC, and individual countries such as Iran, Indonesia, Bolivia, and Brazil emphasized the need to strengthen monitoring, ensure the use of IP flexibilities, promote access to technology, and support traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. They urged WIPO to revive mechanisms for coordination and reporting, which had lapsed in recent years, and called for renewed attention to long-standing issues such as transfer of technology, the impact of IP enforcement on development, and the need for balanced norm-setting.

While the standing agenda item on “IP and Development” was seen by some as a useful platform to promote the positive role of IP in innovation, others expressed concern that it marginalized critical reflections on the structural relationship between IP and development. Few developing countries had submitted proposals under this agenda item, while submissions from developed countries leaned toward showcasing the benefits of IP rather than interrogating its limitations.

Concerns were also raised over the stagnation in discussions on the implementation of recommendations from the Independent Review of the Development Agenda, with no recent follow-up or progress reported. Some Member States and observers noted with concern that the Director General’s annual report on the DA was increasingly being treated as a substitute for the kind of independent, systemic review that had previously been envisioned.

In conclusion, while the CDIP’s work continues to enjoy broad participation and support, the discussions revealed a growing imbalance: development issues are increasingly framed through the lens of IP promotion and project delivery, while the original aims of the DA—centred on systemic reform, equitable access, and critical reflection—are steadily being sidelined. Mechanisms for oversight and coordination have weakened, discussions on transfer of technology and flexibilities have diminished, and the CDIP’s broader mandate risks being reduced to a technical platform rather than a development-oriented governance body. The gap between ambition and implementation remains, and unless deliberately addressed, the DA risks being implemented in form, but not in substance.

V.5 Report on the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC)

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the IGC and renewed the mandate of the IGC for the 2026/2027 biennium on the terms and in accordance with the program proposed by the IGC in its report to the WIPO General Assembly. The mandate of the IGC remains largely unchanged from the past sessions.

Accordingly, during this period, the IGC's work on traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) will remain focused on bridging existing gaps and reaching common ground on key issues. This will include text-based negotiations using all relevant WIPO working documents, such as the latest draft articles (the revised text on "The Protection of Traditional Knowledge: Draft Articles - Facilitators' Rev." and a revised text on "The Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions: Draft Articles – Facilitators' Rev."), as well as contributions from Member States, including studies, national experiences, and legislative models. Notably, these materials are to inform and support negotiations—not delay them or create preconditions.

On the topic of genetic resources, the IGC will not engage in further normative work, following the adoption of the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge in 2024. However, it will continue discussions on related IP issues, particularly in their connection to TK and TCEs.

To structure this work, the Committee will meet three times during the biennium:

- March 2026 (IGC 52)
- September/October 2026 (IGC 53)
- March/April 2027 (IGC 54)

Each session will span eight days and combine negotiations on TK and TCEs with discussions on genetic resources (GR)-related IP matters. The final session will also take stock of progress and offer recommendations moving forward.

In July 2027, the WIPO General Assembly will evaluate the results of this work. Based on the maturity and level of agreement within the draft instruments—particularly regarding objectives, scope, and legal character—it will decide whether to convene a diplomatic conference or continue negotiations.

To ensure inclusive participation, the General Assembly requested the Secretariat to continue supporting expert involvement from developing countries and least developed countries, using established funding mechanisms. It also emphasized the importance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the process. To that end, the Secretariat was asked to organize a hybrid expert workshop—building on previous successful models—to strengthen their engagement in WIPO's normative activities.

The WIPO IGC committee is an ad hoc committee with a two-year mandate that is regularly renewed. The mandate of the committee has focused for most of its 20 years of existence on working with the objective of finalizing an agreement on an international legal instrument(s),

without prejudging the nature of outcome(s), relating to intellectual property, which will ensure the balanced and effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. In 2024, a new WIPO treaty was successfully adopted on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK treaty), which will come into force once 15 countries have ratified. Currently it has 2 ratifications, Malawi and Uganda.

The 51st session of the IGC dealt with the issue of making a recommendation to the General Assembly on the status of the IGC committee, as its mandate expires in 2025, and the content of the mandate and work program for the next period of work. The IGC 51 also continued negotiations on the protection of traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

The IGC undertook long negotiations to reach the agreed mandate by the IGC. During the General Assembly discussions, a clear divergence emerged between developing and developed country groups regarding the way forward on TK, TCEs, and GRs.

Developing countries, speaking through the Asia-Pacific Group, the African Group, GRULAC, the Pacific Islands Group and numerous individual delegations, consistently emphasized the importance of continuing text-based negotiations with the objective of concluding one or more legally binding international instruments on TK and TCEs. They underlined that the successful adoption of the WIPO GRATK Treaty in 2024 was a historic milestone that should provide momentum for the IGC's remaining normative agenda, and that progress on TK and TCEs must now move toward concrete outcomes. Several delegations, including South Africa, Iran, Indonesia, Thailand, Brazil, and members of the Pacific Islands Group, explicitly stated that this process should culminate in the convening of a Diplomatic Conference by 2027. Developing countries also stressed that GRs should remain an integral part of the IGC's work program, not only because of their interlinkage with TK and TCEs but also to support the ratification and implementation of the GRATK Treaty. Ratification of that treaty was strongly encouraged, with Malawi and Uganda highlighted as early ratifiers. Across the board, developing countries stressed the need for mandatory disclosure, fair and equitable benefit-sharing, the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and adequate resources to ensure their effective participation.

By contrast, developed countries—speaking through Group B, the European Union and its Member States, the CEBS Group, as well as individual delegations such as Japan, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea and the United States—endorsed the renewal of the IGC mandate but framed the next biennium primarily in terms of further dialogue, evidence-based exchanges and the narrowing of gaps. While they supported continued discussions on TK and TCEs, they argued that any eventual outcome should be non-binding and measures-based. On GRs, they took the position that normative work had now shifted to the Assembly of the GRATK Treaty, and that IGC discussions should be limited to non-normative exchanges of national experiences and good practices. Developed countries refrained from endorsing any timeline for a Diplomatic Conference, with some, such as Italy, stating explicitly that conditions were not ripe for convening one.

In sum, the General Assembly revealed strong support among developing countries for reasserting the core elements of the IGC mandate: the continuation of text-based negotiations on TK and TCEs with a view to binding outcomes, the inclusion of GRs in the IGC's future agenda in tandem with the GRATK Treaty, and the expectation that the 2027 General

Assembly should take a decision on convening a Diplomatic Conference. Developed countries, while endorsing renewal of the mandate, sought to limit its normative scope, avoid firm timelines, and steer the process toward non-binding, incremental approaches. The discussions thus reflected a familiar North–South divide, but also a renewed determination on the part of developing countries to build on the precedent set by the GRATK Treaty to advance long-awaited international instruments on TK and TCEs.

V.6 Report on the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

CWS adopted new standards (e.g., ST.92) and advanced discussions on blockchain and 3D imaging. Technical assistance and inclusivity were emphasized. Recommendation: institutionalize feedback loops and pilot projects to support adoption in developing countries.

V.7 Report on the Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE)

The WIPO General Assembly took note of the report on the ACE. The General Assembly also approved the repeal of the Special Rules of Procedure of the ACE.

The ACE gathers to exchange information on issues pertaining to IP enforcement. Each year, different topics are addressed by the committee, which does not have a norm-setting agenda. At its 17th session in February 2025, WIPO ACE saw sharp disagreement over a proposal by developing countries—led by Colombia on behalf of GRULAC and supported by the African Group and others—to include counterfeiting and biopiracy in the biotechnology sector as a formal discussion topic. Proponents argued the issue was relevant to enforcement, biodiversity, and the protection of Indigenous knowledge, especially in light of the new WIPO Treaty on Genetic Resources. However, developed countries, including Group B, CEBS, and the EU, opposed the proposal, questioning its relevance to ACE’s mandate and objecting to references to biopiracy. After intense debate, a compromise was reached to include a narrower version of the topic—“The Impact of Intellectual Property Infringement in the Biotechnology Sector”—in the work program for ACE’s next session, reflecting broader divisions over enforcement priorities and development concerns within WIPO.

The discussions in the General Assembly surrounding the report on the seventeenth session of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement, as presented in document WO/GA/58/10, underscored a clear and consistent emphasis from developing countries on the need for a balanced, inclusive, and development-oriented approach to IP enforcement.

Many developing country delegations — including those from India, Iran, Uganda, Namibia, Paraguay, Vanuatu, Brazil, Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, and others — stressed that enforcement could not be reduced to punitive actions alone. Instead, they advocated for comprehensive strategies that included awareness-building, capacity development, and respect for national priorities and socioeconomic contexts. Several stressed that enforcement must support rather than hinder public interest, especially in areas like education, health, biodiversity, and economic inclusion.

The proposal to include biopiracy as a topic in ACE's future work was a focal point for developing countries, with support from Brazil, Iran, and GRULAC. These countries argued that biopiracy distorted the IP system and posed serious socioeconomic and environmental consequences. Brazil called for a wider understanding of enforcement that included issues such

as biopiracy, particularly in the biotechnology sector, arguing that misuse of biological resources and traditional knowledge undermined both innovation and equity. However, opposition from developed countries, particularly the United States, highlighted the ongoing tension over ACE's mandate and the scope of issues it should address.

Iran and Uganda stressed the importance of aligning enforcement with the Development Agenda (DA) Recommendation 45, promoting a rights-based, transparent, and development-sensitive framework. Uganda, Namibia, Vanuatu, and Ghana brought attention to the resource and institutional constraints they face. They emphasized the need for tailored technical assistance, capacity-building for enforcement officials, and regional cooperation. Vanuatu, in particular, called for IP enforcement to be part of a strategy to promote local innovation and protect Indigenous knowledge and cultural expressions, not just to suppress infringement.

Throughout the discussions, developing countries consistently called for enforcement systems that promote fairness, social well-being, and sustainable development. They welcomed the continuation of ACE's existing work program but urged that it remain responsive to their realities — particularly in combating digital piracy, addressing biopiracy, fostering public respect for IP, and ensuring that IP systems do not become tools of exclusion or exploitation.

Ultimately, the discussions highlighted a key divergence: while developed countries pushed for a strict adherence to ACE's original enforcement mandate, developing countries pressed for a broader, more holistic approach — one that recognizes the diverse challenges they face and the transformative role IP can play when aligned with national development goals.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Sixty-Sixth Series of Meetings of the WIPO Assemblies exposed persistent governance challenges within the Organization—particularly the imbalance between developed and developing countries in decision-making structures. While important procedural steps were taken, such as initiating the Director General selection process and approving the 2026/27 Program and Budget, progress on key agenda items remains uneven.

Institutional oversight has improved in certain respects, but significant gaps persist. The evaluation function remains under-resourced and lacks independence. Gender mainstreaming is limited. The composition of the Coordination Committee and Program and Budget Committee continues to marginalize developing countries. Reforms to address these imbalances were deferred once again.

Norm-setting negotiations remain gridlocked. Discussions on the Broadcasting Treaty and on copyright Limitations and Exceptions continue without resolution. While developing countries push for text-based negotiations, developed countries resist. Similarly, in the Standing Committee on Patents, studies continue with no movement toward concrete reforms on transfer of technology or access to medicines.

The adoption of the WIPO Treaty on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK) in 2024 marked an important breakthrough. However, the future of the Intergovernmental Committee's work on Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Traditional Cultural

Expressions (TCEs) remains uncertain amid calls for legally binding instruments from developing countries and resistance from developed countries.

Across various WIPO bodies—including CDIP, SCT, ACE, and CWS—developing countries repeatedly emphasized inclusivity, transparency, and alignment with the Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet development-related priorities are often sidelined or diluted in favour of narrowly technical or market-oriented approaches.

To shift WIPO toward a more equitable, development-responsive future, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Rebalance Governance Structures

- Reform the Coordination Committee and Program and Budget Committee (PBC) to better reflect current WIPO membership. Vacant seats should be filled by 2027 through transparent, regionally representative processes.
- Ensure equitable regional rotation and establish clear metrics to correct long-standing structural imbalances.

2. Strengthen Evaluation and Oversight Functions

- Implement the Management Action Plan to address gaps in evaluation, with proper staffing, independence, and visibility.
- Ensure that oversight functions systematically address gender, equity, and Development Agenda implementation.

3. Advance Parallel Normative Negotiations

- Begin parallel text-based negotiations on the Broadcasting Treaty and on Copyright Limitations and Exceptions to ensure balanced outcomes.
- Use expert intersessional work to resolve technical and policy deadlocks before the 2026 General Assembly.

4. Operationalize the Innovation, Creativity and Development Acceleration Program

- Develop transparent criteria and indicators aligned with Development Agenda goals.
- Prioritize underrepresented regions and innovative, scalable development projects in funding decisions.

5. Revitalize the Development Agenda Mechanisms

- Reinstate formal monitoring systems across all WIPO bodies to track the implementation of Development Agenda recommendations.
- Restore the practice of biennial independent reviews to ensure accountability beyond the Director General's annual report.

6. Ensure Inclusive Participation in the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) Process

- Work toward consensus on binding outcomes for TK and TCEs by 2027 and prepare for a Diplomatic Conference.
- Expand and formalize Indigenous Peoples' participation in text negotiations, with appropriate logistical and financial support.

7. Embed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Consistently

- Clarify WIPO's role in supporting the SDGs within its intellectual property (IP) mandate and promote structured dialogue on SDG-linked activities.
- Encourage compromise on SDG-related language in the Program and Budget to reflect WIPO's position as a United Nations (UN) agency.

8. Enhance Transparency in Budget and Program Implementation

- Provide disaggregated data and clear justifications under the new 8-sector budget model.
- Institutionalize reviews that assess how budgeted activities include marginalized groups and reflect equitable development priorities.

In conclusion, if WIPO is to fulfill its mandate as a truly inclusive, global institution, it must evolve from procedural consensus toward substantive equity. Reforming governance, reinvigorating development mechanisms, and unlocking stalled negotiations are essential steps. Without them, the risk remains that WIPO will be unable to perform its expected role as a specialized UN agency contributing to build up a balanced, development-responsive intellectual property system.