Statement by the South Centre to the Thirty-seventh Session of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), November 16, 2026, Geneva, Switzerland

Thank you, Chair.

The South Centre warmly congratulates you, Chair, and the Vice-Chairs on your election, as well as Deputy Director General Qobo on his appointment. We look forward to his leadership in advancing the development dimension of WIPO's work. The South Centre supports developing countries and LDCs in aligning IP with their development policies and strategies. We look forward to furthering our cooperation.

As we prepare to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the WIPO Development Agenda in 2027, we recall the importance of its vision of an effective, inclusive and balanced intellectual property system that serves development and responds to the needs of developing countries and LDCs.

We encourage Member States to make further efforts to mainstream the development dimension in all of WIPO's work and committees, including but not confined to the CDIP, in line with the Coordination Mechanism adopted by the General Assembly in 2010. Implementation of the Development Agenda should also be pursued at the national level, by aligning IP policies and laws with each country's development priorities. This requires that international IP norm-setting continues to safeguard the policy space and flexibilities that countries need, in line with Recommendations 15 and 17 of the Development Agenda.

We welcome WIPO's recent focus on innovation capabilities and encourage the CDIP to incorporate this into its work. As the 2026 report notes,

“innovation policy cannot rely on one-size-fits-all approaches. Success requires tailoring strategies to regional development levels, existing capability portfolios, and institutional contexts.” It further notes that “global innovation remains strikingly concentrated: a small number of leading economies account for the vast majority of advanced exports, trademarks, patents, and scientific publications, while most countries contribute less than 1 percent to any of these innovation dimensions.”

We also support continued alignment of WIPO’s work with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Building on Recommendations 1, 14 and 40 of the Development Agenda, we encourage WIPO to strengthen its technical assistance on the use of flexibilities in the IP system to protect public health, in coordination with the WHO, the WTO and other relevant agencies. This past 14 November marked the 25th anniversary of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirmed that TRIPS can and should be implemented in a manner supportive of public health and access to medicines for all.

We commend Member States for their proposals for new CDIP projects that advance the development dimension of intellectual property.

Finally, we encourage the CDIP to move forward with the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Implementation of the Development Agenda and of the External Review of WIPO’s Technical Assistance, and to ensure regular reporting on progress. We recall in particular the Independent Review’s call to strengthen the expertise of WIPO staff on the development dimension of intellectual property.

Thank you.