

UK National Statement – WIPO General Assemblies 2013

The UK would like to thank the Chair as well as the Director General and his Secretariat for their hard work in preparing for these Assemblies. I would like to support the statements made by the EU Presidency and by Group B.

This has been a significant year for WIPO and its Member States. The agreement of the Marrakech Treaty to allow access to copyright protected works for visually impaired persons was a real achievement and a demonstration of the important work this organisation can accomplish.

We would like to capitalise on the momentum we currently have to set a date at these assemblies for a Diplomatic Conference on the Designs Formalities Treaty in 2014. We believe this treaty will bring real benefits to WIPO member state businesses looking to operate abroad. By simplifying and aligning application procedures we can significantly reduce the costs and bureaucracy of exporting, and make the Hague system work more effectively.

We also welcome the commitment made at the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights to continue work towards what we hope will be a comprehensive treaty on broadcasting rights, and look forward to making progress under a new mandate on the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions. We do however believe strongly in judging each potential treaty's readiness for a Diplomatic Conference according to the maturity of its draft text, and would not like to see any artificial links being made between progress in unrelated Committees.

Of course, we cannot neglect the international regimes already in place. It is good to see progress being made in improving the PCT, as this is an area where we can achieve widespread impact on the global patent system relatively quickly. We were very pleased that agreement was reached at the recent working group to implement a number of PCT improvement proposals and that the associated amendments to the Regulations will go before the PCT assembly this week. We hope further progress can be made in the coming year on other priority areas, including collaborative searching.

On the subject of business and innovation, we would like particularly at these assemblies to support the WIPO Forum event which will take place here tomorrow afternoon and to thank the secretariat for the work it has done to bring together such an impressive panel of innovators. We think the time is right to bring another perspective to WIPO – that of the users of the IP system – and hope that this event will encourage increased engagement from enterprises in countries at all stages of development, so that WIPO can tailor its approach to have the most effective impact. We are here on behalf of the users and consumers of the global IP system, and hope that increased input from them can serve to remind us of the importance of the work our Committees do in creating and reforming international IP regimes and agreements. It is imperative that these Committees be allowed to work on issues of substance in a constructive manner

External Offices have been the subject of much debate recently and we consider this to be an important issue. We think that it is crucial to have clear and transparent guiding principles for these offices. We believe that a strategically planned network of External Offices could play a key capacity-building role and raise awareness of WIPO's global IP services. We therefore hope that good progress can be made this week in a working group to look into this issue.

Thank you again, Chair, and we look forward to a constructive meeting of the General Assemblies this week.

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