

**WIPO Program and Budget Committee**  
**Opening Remarks by the Director General**

Monday, July 12, 2021

Good morning and a warm welcome to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC). It is an honor to introduce the Program of Work and Budget for the 2022/23 biennium, the first under the new Administration.

I had hoped to address all of you in person here in Geneva, but current circumstances mean that this is still not possible. Nevertheless, I am glad to see so many people – including old friends and colleagues - in the hall today and I am confident that our hybrid deliberations will ensure that this week's agenda proceeds in a transparent and inclusive fashion and I am grateful for the flexibility you have shown during preparations for the PBC.

I would first like to thank the Chair, Your Excellency, Ambassador Sabri Bachtobji, for your wise guidance and counsel since I assumed my duties as Director General. I would also like to put on record my appreciation for the work of the Vice-Chairs of the Committee, Mr José Antonio Gil Celedonio, Director General of the Spanish Trade Mark and Patent Office, and Ambassador Katrina Naut of the Dominican Republic. The Secretariat pledges our continued support to the work of the Chair and Vice-Chairs and of this important committee.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Member States for your engagement with me and my team in advance of our deliberations this week. Your inputs, views and guidance have been absolutely instrumental in helping us put together our proposed Program of Work and Budget, as well as the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026. They are not just our plans, but truly your plans as well, and we hope to continue this close engagement with all of you as Members in the years ahead.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of my ADGs and DDGs and their teams in the months long process to the discussions this week, and to especially mention the work of the Finance team led by ADG Andy Staines.

Excellences, Dear colleagues and Dear Friends,

Over the course of this week, you will be considering performance and finance reviews, planning and budget documents, as well as items related to decisions reached at the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC and the 2020 Assemblies of WIPO Member States. Before I turn to each of these items, let me say a few words about the broader context in which we meet and how this has impacted our operations.

When the pandemic first struck, WIPO rapidly transitioned to digital and remote working. We pivoted quickly and were able to maintain our work output thanks to the adaptability, dedication and professionalism of WIPO staff.

As a result, overall performance has shown resilience and strength – despite the challenges of the last year. The 2020 WIPO Performance Report highlights that two thirds of targets are assessed as on track, only a slight reduction when compared to the first year of the last, pre-pandemic, biennium. The surplus for 2020 is estimated to be around CHF136 million, through a combination of lower than expected impact on our IP filings, and a reduction in our expenditure. We therefore remain in good financial health.

However, this is no time for us to let up on being prudent with our finances. Historically, there is often a delay between an economic downturn and its full impact on IP and innovation, and the global economic outlook remains highly volatile. More importantly, it is only right that we provide value to you, as our Members, for each dollar that we spend. We will therefore continue taking a prudent and responsible approach to our finances. This will ensure that the organization remains on a healthy financial footing and that we can continue to invest in our people and services, as well as providing for our long-term liabilities.

Turning to our future work, we have proposed a Program of Work and Budget that raises the bar for what we hope to deliver to you over the next two years, within a modest expenditure increase of 3 per cent. This is set against a forecasted 8 per cent increase in income.

Within the Budget, we intend to maintain personnel expenditure at current levels - more or less - but deliver more to you through empowering staff, working better across work teams and units, and transforming our culture. On non-personnel costs, the additional investment proposed will enable us to continue momentum towards WIPO's digital transformation, as well as ensuring that our wider infrastructure and services remain appropriately resourced.

WIPO's work must support all Member States, and especially bring the benefits of IP to developing countries and LDCs. Member States will also note that development expenditure accounts for 18.5 per cent of the budget, a 4.5 per cent increase over the last biennium. But beyond these numbers, we are shifting towards impact driven development model, where we now want to go down to the ground, to the grassroots, to help IP be used by innovators, creators, MSMEs, communities and others who have traditionally not been served as well by the IP ecosystem.

This Budget also places a key emphasis on simplicity, transparency and accountability. As the documents before you indicate, we have taken significant steps to streamline our reporting framework – moving from 38 Expected Results to 16, from over 240 Performance Indicators to 77 KPIs, and from 52 Program-Level Risks to 26 Organizational and Sector-level risks. We believe this will make it easier for Member States to monitor progress towards our expected results and to engage with us concretely and meaningfully about our work.

The 2022/23 Budget is not a standalone document. It is closely connected, and gives effect to the Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026. The MTSP's Vision, which we believe encapsulates your aspirations, as well as that of my colleagues, is for a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by IP for the good of everyone.

In this Vision, IP is a powerful tool for every country to create jobs, attract investments, support enterprise growth, lift up communities, and ultimately develop dynamic economies and vibrant societies.

To do this, we will need to continue doing well in our traditional areas of strength – as the international norm and standard setting agency for IP, and in the provision of our global services. But we must now also go beyond the technical and legal aspects of IP to bring IP to the person in the street, and to make them understand how IP is part of their aspirations, their journey and their lives. We need to go beyond engaging with only the experts and specialists to engaging with people everywhere, and allow them to see how IP is relevant to them, and can be used as a tool to bring their innovation, their ideas and creativity to the world.

We will build practical IP skills and step up our work in support of innovators, creators, businesses, researchers and communities. We will ensure that Youth, Women, MSMEs and others that had not been so well served by the IP ecosystem are now areas of collective focus for us. And we will redouble our work with external stakeholders and partners across the UN family, and other international agencies, to strengthen sustainable development and address global issues and challenges.

In this regard, let me reiterate our commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. You will see that the SDGs run throughout the MTSP and the Program of Work and Budget. Ultimately, each of the global challenges that we face: from combatting climate change, to providing equal access to education, to reducing inequalities via fair work and sustainable growth, requires innovation and creativity to be harnessed around the world - for the good of the world.

And there is no challenge more pressing than overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic and supporting our Member States to build back better. Let me repeat what I have shared in different open forums over the past few months – WIPO believes in vaccine equity and that no one is safe until everyone is safe. While we are witnessing the fastest deployment of vaccines in history, with delivery into people's arms within one year of the start of the pandemic, there is much more to do to ensure that this reaches all communities around the world. We are committed at WIPO to playing our full part in this shared endeavor.

WIPO is also committed to continuing to assist Member States on a unilateral basis as you address the pandemic and plan for the post-Covid recovery. We recognize that building back inclusively and sustainably is a priority for governments around the world and an area where innovation and creativity will play a key role. Therefore, I am happy to announce today that we are providing a package of services and measures designed to support all Member States as you overcome the pandemic and rebuild.

The package covers five areas where WIPO has significant in-house experience and expertise: first, Policy and Legislative Assistance; second, Technical Assistance and Capacity Building; third, Innovation Support and Technology Transfer; fourth, IP Dispute Resolution and fifth, Knowledge Resources. My colleague Mr. Sherif Saadallah, the Executive Director of WIPO Academy, will serve as the WIPO focal point for this package of measures. Many of you already know him well and I would encourage you to contact him directly to begin tapping on our package as you continue to confront this global emergency.

At the same time, we will also continue our trilateral cooperation with the WHO and WTO. Member States will be aware of the joint communique issued last month with DG Tedros of the WHO and DG Ngozi of the WTO, announcing that all three of us will intensify our co-operation to offer trilateral technical assistance and capacity building initiatives. I can confirm that the first trilateral workshop on technology transfer and licensing is being planned to take place before October.

Dear Members, Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

During the course of this week, you will also discuss various items following discussions at the 31<sup>st</sup> PBC and 2020 Assemblies of Member States.

The Administration is pleased to table a revised policy on languages - as you have requested. Multilingualism is an essential part of our ethos and a vital tool in reaching out to all in the world. If WIPO is to reach the innovators of tomorrow – whether they are youths, entrepreneurs, SMEs or communities on the ground – then we have to connect with them in their language that they understand. As such, the revised Language Policy forms a core component of the broader impact-based approach as outlined within the MTSP and the Program and Work Budget. We also propose to embrace and expand the use of cutting-edge translation technologies through the multi-year implementation roadmap.

With regards to membership of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, as requested by the Committee I have engaged with the Deputy Secretary General of the UN in her capacity as Chair of the UNSDG. The Secretariat remains ready to assist you in your deliberations on this matter.

Finally, the Secretariat will continue to be guided by Member States on the Terms of Reference for the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices and the Methodology for Allocation of Income and Expenditure by Union. As always, my team and I remain available to support you on both issues and in any way that you find useful.

Dear Excellences, Dear Colleagues and Dear Friends,

As the documents before you highlight, WIPO is committed to leading the development of a balanced and inclusive global IP ecosystem. One that supports all Member States to use intellectual property as a tool for growth, development and sustainability; and one that helps advance our shared objectives, from accelerating progress towards the SDGs to ensuring that all countries have the tools at your disposal to overcome Covid-19 and build back from this pandemic.

Despite the challenges of the last 16 months, WIPO's strong foundations remain intact. For this, I want to acknowledge and pay tribute to my colleagues and our predecessors. Over the coming biennium, we propose to maintain this balanced and prudent approach whilst placing a renewed emphasis on how IP can meet global challenges, have a positive impact on people's lives around the world and support growth and development in all Member States.

Once again, thank you for your engagement to date and best wishes to call Members for a fruitful and successful PBC week.

Thank you.