

## **Program and Budget Committee**

### **Thirty-Third Session Geneva, September 13 to 17, 2021**

#### **UNSDG MEMBERSHIP**

*prepared by the Secretariat*

#### Background

1. At its 32<sup>nd</sup> session held from July 12 to 16, 2021, the WIPO Program and Budget Committee (PBC) continued its consideration of the item on United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Membership (see document WO/PBC/32/5), and adopted the following decision:

*“The Program and Budget Committee (PBC):*

- (i) requests the Secretariat to continue to engage with the Development Coordination Office to obtain additional clarifications on the impact of UNSDG membership on WIPO’s work.*
  
- (ii) requests the Secretariat to submit a report of the Secretariat’s further consultations referred to in paragraph (i) above in order to facilitate the discussion on the decision on UNSDG membership at the 33rd session of the Program and Budget Committee.”*

2. Pursuant to the above decision and as mandated, the WIPO Secretariat continued its engagement with the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) concerning the impact of UNSDG membership on WIPO's work.

3. The present document reports on the information obtained and attempts to assess the impact on the delivery of WIPO's development work. Firstly, the document will recall the current *modus operandi* of WIPO's development activities; secondly, highlight the main shifts in the delivery of technical assistance should WIPO decide to join the UNSDG; and thirdly, assess the prospective opportunities and possible challenges.

#### WIPO's Development Work: Current *Modus Operandi*

4. As reflected in WIPO's draft biennial Program of Work and Budget for 2022/2023 and the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2022-2026), WIPO is committed to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and helping countries leverage innovation and creativity for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. As articulated in WIPO's Results Framework, the Organization supports governments, enterprises, communities and individuals to use intellectual property (IP) as a tool for growth and sustainable development. WIPO's development work extends from this and is based on a dialogue with member states in which their needs are identified and matched against the services, platforms, tools and expertise that the Organization offers. WIPO's development work is also the product of collective decisions by member states such as those taken in relation to projects adopted by the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP).

6. In developing and carrying out development activities/projects, WIPO engages with a wide range of stakeholders in creativity and innovation ecosystems. WIPO's Regional and National Development Sector bases its work on annual planning for member states that is driven by national development plans and priorities, as well as the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. As a United Nations Specialized Agency, WIPO collaborates with other United Nations system entities on areas of common interest, although its use of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator (RC) system and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) has been limited. While WIPO is not a member of the UNSDG, it has been involved with developing and implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) - the main development assistance planning tool for UNSDG members – in Algeria, through the WIPO External Office situated in the country.

#### UNSDG Membership and Impact on WIPO's Development Work

7. In 2018, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 72/279 on the Repositioning of the United Nations Development System (UNDS). Core to this repositioning is a reinvigorated RC system that aims at facilitating UN system wide engagement in support of the delivery of the SDGs and the realization of the 2030 Agenda in 162 countries and territories. A major feature in this reform is enhanced coordination among UN entities at the global level - through the UNSDG Principals meetings; at the regional level - through the Regional Cooperation Platforms (RCPs) and DCO's regional offices; and at the national level - through the RC system and a strengthened UNCT.

8. The RC represents all members of the UNSDG irrespective of whether they are resident or non-resident in a country/territory. RCs and UNCTs may be particularly leveraged by non-resident agencies - in which case the agencies' headquarters would directly engage with UNCTs to advance its interests. The RC would be available to coordinate any activities at the field level that UNSDG members may require and facilitate outcomes for both member states and individual agencies within the framework of their own mandates.

9. To extract value from the UNSDG, particularly at the field level, WIPO would need to i) engage at the regional level with DCO's regional teams and RCPs where issue based coalitions are formed to ensure that IP where relevant is well positioned in support of the SDGs; ii) take part in the UNCT Common Country Analysis (CCAs) to assess/identify the IP related needs and place WIPO's priorities in a given country/territory; and iii) work with the RC and relevant national authorities for the integration of WIPO's offerings in the UNSDCF that is prepared and finalized in consultation and agreement with Governments.

10. The UNSDCF is the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in each country. A key aspect of the UNSDCF is the concept of dual accountability. This involves the establishment of a clear dual reporting model, with UNCT members accountable and reporting to their respective entities on individual mandates, and periodically reporting to the RC on their individual activities and on their respective contributions to the collective results of the UN development system towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the country level. The UNSDCF framework may include joint programming and planning or individual assistance for targeted activities of a specialized nature. Once a UNSDCF is joined, it is expected that entities will align, in accordance with their mandate, specific country development programming with the UNSDCF. It should be noted that, of course, entities would have contributed to this UNSDCF during its development. This UNSDCF, however, would not preclude United Nations Specialized Agencies from attending or responding directly to individual development assistance requests formulated or agreed by WIPO's Member States and which were not foreseen nor specifically indicated in a given Framework. United Nations Specialized Agencies would only need to keep the RC informed of their engagement in the country whether UNSDCF related or otherwise.

11. Signing up to the UNSDG does not mean a United Nations Specialized Agency would automatically become member of all UNCTs in the 162 countries and territories. Each United Nations Specialized Agency would have to decide which UNCTs it wants to join, based on its program of work and priorities. The criteria that would apply to such decision would need to be determined and may include considerations such as WIPO's level of engagement in a country/territory; WIPO's permanent representation in-country; the interest of Governments in integrating IP in UNSDCF.

12. Joining a UNCT is effected by means of an exchange of letters and an agreement with DCO setting the terms of engagement.

13. Joining the UNSDG would also involve an enhanced engagement in the context of the UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations system (QCPR). The QCPR is the main instrument for system wide strategic policy orientations and operational modalities for development cooperation.

## Opportunities and Challenges

14. The reformed United Nations Development System is intended to further synergies and inter-agency efforts to maximize the efficient use of the UN system offerings in support of the implementation of national sustainable development strategies and plans in program countries. Joining the UNSDG could result in an increased understanding of the importance of IP both as a cross-cutting enabler of many of the SDGs and to incentivize local creativity and innovation. As such WIPO's work could gain more visibility across the UN system and with a wider range of national authorities. New partnership opportunities may be generated with UN entities in areas or projects of mutual interest to ensure complementarity in action and possibly increased impact in program delivery. In such a context, WIPO would further assert its position within the UN family and with national authorities as the lead agency on questions pertaining to IP and consolidate its standing in the IP policy space.

15. At the regional level, the UNSDG has instituted Regional Coordination Mechanisms through the Regional DCO Teams. At that level, issue-based coalitions and groups have been formed based on the mandates of the organizations. These coalitions and groups are co-chaired by the participating agencies and provide a platform for better coordination of activities in areas of mutual interest. The geographical alignment of the issue-based coalitions and groups is organized around the geographical areas covered by the regional United Nations Economic Commissions. In this regard, using relationships and partnerships developed in the issue-based coalitions, an organization with limited physical presence may partner and pool resources with another United Nations entity towards achieving a common goal.

16. UNSDG membership, particularly where UNSDCFs are signed or where an Agency is part of an issue-based coalition at a regional level, involves considerable coordination work including in work planning and reporting which are resource intensive exercises. Performance appraisal frameworks for staff members involved in UNSDCFs will need to reflect this engagement and training for them may also be needed to facilitate the shift to this new form of assistance delivery under the UNSDCF.

*17. The Program and Budget Committee (PBC) is invited to consider and take a decision on the invitation for WIPO to become a UNSDG member.*

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