

WIPO



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WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Twenty-Third (10th Extraordinary) Session Geneva, September 7 to 15, 1998

INTEGRATION OF BUDGET AND PREMISES COMMITTEES

Memorandum by the Director General

Budget Committee

1. The Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, at their seventh series of meetings in 1976, decided to set up a Budget Committee and agreed on the following principles (AB/VII/23, paragraph 155):

“(i) the Director General would convene each year a budget committee consisting of representatives of 11 States, one of them being Switzerland; the States would appoint their representatives; it was desirable that they be both experts in financial matters and familiar with the program of WIPO and the Unions;

“(ii) the budget committee would examine a preliminary draft program and budget prepared by the Director General for submission to the WIPO Coordination Committee and the Executive Committees of the Paris and Berne Unions and, every three years, to the other Administrative Bodies as well;

“(iii) the draft program and budget document would report on the recommendations made by the budget committee, whether or not they were followed in the draft program and budget;

“(iv) for 1977 the following ten States (in addition to Switzerland) would be invited to send experts: Brazil, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), India, Japan, Soviet Union, United States of America;

“(v) the WIPO Coordination Committee would re-examine the list in 1977 so as to ensure adequate rotation.”

2. The Assemblies of the Member States, at their twenty-sixth series of meetings in September-October 1995, decided to extend the terms of reference of the Budget Committee (AB/XXVI/17 and AB/XXVI/19, paragraph 256(a)) as follows:

“1. The Committee shall examine any question arising in connection with the audited accounts, proposals for the budgets of WIPO and the financing thereof.

“2. The Committee will examine any financial question which may be referred to it by the Assembly or submitted to it by the Director General. It can make recommendations to the Assembly or to the Director General on any matter with financial consequences.

“3. The Committee shall meet at least once a year.”

3. The Budget Committee held its first session on May 2 to 4, 1977 (WO/BC/I) and recently its nineteenth session (sixth extraordinary), on June 4 and 5, 1998, jointly with the Premises Committee (WO/BC/19/5-WO/PC/9/5).

4. At present the following 27 States are members of the Budget Committee for the period October 1, 1997 to September 30, 2001: Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uzbekistan and Switzerland (*ex officio*) (AB/XXXI/12, paragraph 169).

Premises Committee

5. The Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO, at their twentieth session in 1989, decided to set up a WIPO Premises Committee to give advice to the Assemblies of the Member States and the Director General concerning the needs of WIPO for premises until the year 2000 (AB/XX/20).

6. The Premises Committee held its first session on January 18 and 19, 1990, and recently its ninth session on June 4 and 5, 1998, jointly with the Budget Committee (WO/BC/19/5-WO/PC/9/5).

7. At present the following 13 States are members of the Premises Committee for the period October 1, 1997 to September 30, 2001: Algeria, China, Colombia, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and United States of America (AB/XXXI/12, paragraph 170).

8. The Secretary of the sessions of the Budget and Premises Committees over the last years has been the Head, Budget Section, who is responsible for program and budget matters and continues to assist the Officers of the Bureau in performing their tasks, with the assistance of other offices concerned.

Joint Sessions of Budget and Premises Committees

9. In view of the budgetary implications of all proposals before the Premises Committee and in order to conduct proceedings in a more cost-effective and coherent manner, the Director General recommended, at the twenty-sixth series of meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States in September-October 1995, to merge the Budget and Premises Committees into one Committee, taking into account that all Member States of WIPO could attend the meetings of both Committees (AB/XXVI/19, paragraph 254). The Budget Committee, at its 14th session, and the Premises Committee, at its fifth session, held on May 13 to 15, 1995 their first joint session on premises-related issues under the same chairmanship and with all members of both Committees (WO/BC/XIV/3-WO/PC/V/3). The two Committees made recommendations to the WIPO General Assembly with the understanding that the officers of the further joint session of both Committees be the same as the officers elected for that session (WO/BC/XIV/3-WO/PC/V/3, paragraph 32). This agreed procedure proved to be highly effective and was endorsed by the Member States, avoiding duplication of proceedings, facilitating consensus-building and expediting decision-making by the WIPO General Assembly. As a result, five joint sessions of both Committees have been held so far to deal with premises-related issues.

10. Pursuant to consistent policy and practice of the Member States over the last three years to hold joint sessions of the Budget and Premises Committees, and taking into account the benefits of joint proceedings in operational and budgetary terms, there is a continued need for joint sessions of the Budget and Premises Committees on premises-related issues. In view of the current and planned major projects on premises, including renovation, modernization, connection and extension of the WMO building (WO/GA/22/6), international architectural competition, development of detailed building specifications, construction and connection of a new office building, construction of a larger main conference room and additional parking facilities, it will be necessary to consider the above projects in a number of joint sessions of the two Committees in order to avoid duplication of work, inconsistencies and additional costs.

Integration of Budget and Premises Committees

11. In addition to the review of the WIPO draft program and budget for the biennium and ongoing premises projects, the Budget Committee has been called upon to consider and make recommendations on an increasing number of other proposed program activities relating to long-term capital investments such as Information Technology Projects (A/32/4 and A/32/7) and Automation of the Patent Cooperation (PCT) System (A/32/5 and A/32/7), as well as to other budgetary issues such as Policy on Budget Surplus (WO/GA/23/2) and Policy on Reserve Funds (WO/GA/23/3). Furthermore, pursuant to the new program and budget structure and management approach of WIPO, based on the principles of transparency and accountability, the Member States will continue to be regularly involved and consulted on the status of WIPO's program and budget implementation and its financial situation, in the context of WIPO's Annual Report and its Financial Management Report for the biennium.

Accordingly, the Budget Committee will increasingly review program and budget matters and financial questions, and make recommendations to the WIPO General Assembly.

12. In view of the positive experience over the last three years with the joint sessions of the Budget and Premises Committees, the increasing number of program issues with budgetary implications for consideration by the Member States, the new program and budget structure based on transparency and accountability, and the need to streamline WIPO's governance structure in a more cost-effective and efficient manner,

the WIPO General Assembly is invited to decide:

(i) to integrate the Budget and Premises Committees into the WIPO Program and Budget Committee, assuming the functions of both Committees (paragraphs 1, 2 and 5, above);

(ii) to review the membership of the WIPO Program and Budget Committee, composed of the members of both Committees, upon expiration of their current term in September 2001 (AB/XXXI/12, paragraphs 169 and 170), with a view to ensuring adequate geographical representation of the Member States of WIPO.

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