

WIPO Coordination Committee

Eighty-First (53rd Ordinary) Session
Geneva, July 14 to 22, 2022

REPORT

adopted by the WIPO Coordination Committee

1. The WIPO Coordination Committee was concerned with the following items on the Consolidated Agenda (document A/63/1): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10(ii), 11, 12, 13, 19, 20 and 21.
2. The reports on the said items, with the exception of items 7, 12 and 13 are contained in the General Report (document A/63/10).
3. The report on items 7, 12 and 13 are contained in the present document.
4. Ambassador Alfredo Suescum Alfaro (Mr.) (Panama) was elected Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee; Taeho Lee (Mr.) (Republic of Korea) and Vivienne Katjuongua (Ms.) (Namibia) were elected Vice-Chairs.

ITEM 7 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

DRAFT AGENDAS FOR 2023 ORDINARY SESSIONS

5. Discussions were based on document A/63/4.

6. The WIPO Coordination Committee adopted Annexes I and II; the Paris Union Executive Committee adopted Annex III; the Berne Union Executive Committee adopted Annex IV.

ITEM 12 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

REPORTS ON STAFF MATTERS

(i) Report on Human Resources

7. Discussions were based on documents WO/CC/81/INF/1 and WO/CC/81/3.

8. The Chair introduced Agenda Item 12 and mentioned that there were two sub-items under consideration. For the first sub-item, two documents were under consideration: the Annual Report on Human Resources, document WO/CC/81/INF/1, and the WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC), document WO/CC/81/3.

9. The Secretariat stated that it was pleased to present the Annual Report on Human Resources, which was also presented as an information document at the 34th Session of the Program and Budget Committee (PBC), held in June. It added that the Annual Report should be read in conjunction with the Human Resources (HR) Brochure, which was available online and could be downloaded from the WIPO website. The Secretariat mentioned that the Annual Report on Human Resources covered the calendar year for the first time. i.e., the period from January 1 to December 31, 2021, and as such, it also included some of the topics reflected in the previous Annual Report which covered the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, which was already presented to the WIPO Coordination Committee in September 2021. The Secretariat stated that the workforce remained stable in terms of numbers and continued to be characterized by flexibility, with a 67.6 per cent and 32.4 per cent proportion between core and flexible resources, respectively. From an overall geographical representation perspective, and as a result of a suite of outreach efforts, WIPO hired 34 professionals and directors from all regions in 2021. In addition, it continued its efforts on the Focal Points Initiative, which aimed at attracting a diverse candidate pool to vacancies through in-country outreach and provided support to potential candidates to increase their chances in the selection process. Eight capacity-building presentations were made to focal points during 2021. The Secretariat also mentioned that the Young Experts Program (YEP) was developed and launched in November 2021, to train the next generation of global IP leaders to help build innovation ecosystems around the world. YEP attracted some 4,000 applicants, including more than 1,500 from Africa, 400 from Latin America and the Caribbean, almost 900 from Asia and the Pacific, 350 from Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia and over 200 from the Middle East. It added that the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) was instrumental in continuing to expand support to the work-life balance of staff, as a flexible approach to working was business-critical and contributed to WIPO being an attractive employer. The Secretariat recalled that a new HR Strategy had been developed and was submitted to the WIPO Coordination Committee in October 2021, setting the direction for HRMD's strategic work for the coming five years. It added that a 'One-Stop-Shop' service model for HRMD had been announced at the end of 2021, and led to the restructuring of the Department in February 2022, with the aim to allow HRMD to focus on service delivery, and integrate thematic areas, rather than functions. As part of the restructuring, the Diversity and Inclusion area was now part of

Talent Management in order to ensure that diversity and inclusion were further mainstreamed and at the heart of HR initiatives, approaches and practices. As a follow-up to the review of WIPO's Performance Management and Staff Development System (PMSDS), HRMD would also develop a new performance system in the coming two years, ensuring that performance management was more closely linked to development and other talent processes. In the meantime, adjustments had been made to the current system with the introduction of calibration of the 2021 evaluations for grades P4 and above. With respect to engagement, the Secretariat stated that changing WIPO's culture, listening to the voice of its workforce in order to create a trust-based, dynamic and rewarding culture, was a key priority and that the Voice of the Employee Platform provided real-time and on-demand access to employee feedback and key improvement opportunities for all work teams. It added that the first employee engagement survey was launched on May 9 of this year and ended on May 29, with an overall participation rate of 60 per cent. The outcome was an engagement rating of 74 per cent at the organizational level, which was one below the benchmark reference corresponding to a group of 1000 organizations. The survey had identified some potential areas of improvement around cross-organizational communication, collaboration and well-being and also highlighted the need to develop career development opportunities for staff beyond the current process of applying to externally advertised positions. On the other hand, the survey also identified areas of strength, which included purpose, communication within teams, and accountability. With respect to audit recommendations, the Secretariat informed the WIPO Coordination Committee that, as of December 31, 2021, there were 34 open audit recommendations for HRMD, out of which 29 were from the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) and another five from the External Auditors. As a result of targeted efforts, all of the five External Auditor's recommendations were implemented and closed, while 12 IOD recommendations were considered implemented and closed, including two recommendations that dated back to 2018. The Secretariat added that a further three recommendations would be requested to be closed in the near future, whereas out of the eight new IOD recommendations from the Review of the PMSDS, one had already been implemented and closed.

10. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Secretariat for preparing the Annual Report on Human Resources and, in the interest of time, recalled its statement on the report delivered at the 34th Session of the PBC and wished to reiterate the message expressed in that statement.

11. The Delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Secretariat for having prepared and submitted the Annual Report on Human Resources, and welcomed the progress made in implementing the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). The Delegation was of the view that it was necessary to include, in the report and on a regular basis, data relating to geographical representation from among the Member States and a breakdown by post held. It added that the last time such information was included in the report was in 2017, and that such statistics would make it possible to assess appropriately the real situation concerning the issue of geographical representation of staff in the Organization. The Delegation called upon the Secretariat to implement strictly the decisions and recommendations made by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The Delegation supported the direction outlined in the HR Strategy for 2022 to 2026, and stated that a closer link between human resources policy and the specific needs of WIPO enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization through regular reviews of staff performance as well as the improvement of management would be appreciated. In its view, the stated aim of increasing diversity should not conflict with the key principles of staff recruitment, the professional quality of the candidates, whilst ensuring fair geographical representation among staff. With respect to the WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC), the Delegation stated that it had no objection to the proposal to the WIPO Coordination Committee, that Mr. Moncef Charaabi be elected as member of the WSPC for a period of four years starting September 1, 2022. The Delegation

also mentioned that it would be a good idea to have a more unified application of the strategy on human resources throughout the entire UN System.

12. The Delegation of India, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, thanked the Secretariat for the detailed Annual Report on Human Resources and appreciated the Secretariat's efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment and for improving its results of the UN-SWAP. However, the Group believed that a similar concerted approach was needed to narrow gaps in terms of equitable geographical representation in human resources in the Organization. The Group noted WIPO's efforts aimed at attracting a more diverse candidate pool to apply for vacancies and believed that geographical representation of human resources in each sector should be included in the HR report. It also welcomed the new YEP, launched in 2021, to train the next generation of global IP leaders to help build innovation ecosystems around the world and looked forward to its continuation. The Group looked forward to its continued constructive engagement with the Secretariat, aimed at strengthening its efforts for an inclusive, diverse and globally representative workforce.

13. The Delegation of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group, congratulated the Chair on his election and reiterated its full support in the discharge of his responsibilities. The Group took note of the Annual Report on Human Resources contained in document WO/CC/81/INF/1 and thanked the Secretariat for its preparation and presentation. It welcomed the progress made by the Organization in terms of human resources management in a world of work, which was constantly changing. The Organization needed, and that was recognized, to have competent and committed staff capable of achieving the strategic goals set by management and able to respond effectively to the expectations of Member States and others. The Group was grateful to the Secretariat for what it was doing to increase geographical diversity through various awareness building and outreach programs, including the Focal Point Initiative, the training course program, and WIPO's presence on online social media platforms among others. It was of the view that other improvements to the recruitment policies remained necessary, however, particularly to enable candidates from countries that were under-represented or not represented to increase their chance of being selected by providing support and advice throughout the recruitment process. In its opinion, the report did not properly cover the question of geographical balance within WIPO's staff, particularly with respect to the measures taken by management to correct the imbalances found in several strategic sectors, where some regions were unrepresented, and which particularly applied to management-level posts. The Group stated that this lack of balance was very clear in several strategic sectors where, for example, Africa remained either unrepresented or under-represented. This was true in the Patents and Technology Sector, the IP and Innovation Ecosystems Sector and to a lesser extent, in the Regional and National Development Sector. Therefore, the Group wished to propose to the WIPO Coordination Committee that the Annual Report on Human Resources systematically include detailed information on measures taken to improve geographical balance in all areas, particularly in senior posts and at management-level posts. The Group also wished to emphasize that heads of sectors and divisions should have greater responsibility for ensuring diversity among the staff who were under their direct responsibility and that this should be a criterion when it came to the performance assessment carried out by the Director General. With respect to gender equality, the Group noted with satisfaction that, at the end of last year, women represented 47.9 per cent of all senior managers and officials in the Organization. However, it remained concerned about the lack of gender balance at the D2 and P5 levels, where the Organization had unfortunately slipped backwards instead of moving forward. The Group urged the Secretariat to provide figures in an Annex to the Annual Report on Human Resources on the diversity of staff, in terms of gender and geographical balance. The Group welcomed WIPO's initiatives, particularly in having carried out the YEP and stated that 1,500 young Africans had submitted their candidatures to the Program, which showed how interested they were in intellectual property (IP) and innovation. It believed that this Program should also be used as a pool for future recruitment of new talent to the Organization as this would provide the prospect of a professional career to

trainees from unrepresented or under-represented countries. Lastly, the Group hoped that the positive trends seen on geographical diversity would be more visible in the future, so as to enable WIPO to better reflect the various characteristics of the people it served.

14. The Delegation of Slovakia, speaking on behalf of the Central European and Baltic States (CEBS) Group, thanked the Secretariat for having prepared and presented the Annual Report on Human Resources and stated that human resources were the backbone of WIPO, and their good administration was a key to the effectiveness and performance of the Organization. At the outset, the CEBS Group noted with pleasure the stable proportion between core and flexible resources and commended the efforts to achieve gender parity, whilst welcoming in particular the gender balance targets for the biennium 2022-2023. Regrettably, the CEBS Group noted a regression and representation of women in some positions and it looked forward to achieving the targets in the coming years. At the same time, it noted WIPO's improved compliance rate with the UN-SWAP. The CEBS Group stated that, while not neglecting a merit-based approach in the recruitment process that ensured the highest efficiency, competence and integrity of staff, it attached great importance to balanced geographical representation, as it was not among the over-represented groups. However, the CEBS Group was confident that through the joint efforts of and close cooperation between WIPO and its members, the Organization would be able to attract qualified candidates from the still unrepresented or under-represented countries in the foreseeable future. In that regard, it welcomed WIPO's efforts with respect to the outreach campaigns through various social media channels, the strengthening of the Focal Point Initiative, and the launch of the YEP. The CEBS Group recognized that all this had been done to raise awareness of career opportunities in WIPO, to stimulate interest of high quality candidates and to attract diverse candidates from unrepresented or under-represented Member States. Furthermore, it noted that the HR Strategy would be critical in achieving the vision articulated in the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026. Therefore, the CEBS Group encouraged the Secretariat to follow the seven main objectives of the HR Strategy, which should set the standards for HR work for the next few years. Finally, it believed that WIPO would remain a fully open, transparent and human-centered Organization.

15. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic, speaking on behalf the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), mentioned that it was delighted to see the Chair presiding over this meeting and thanked HRMD for submitting the Annual Report on Human Resources. As far as GRULAC was concerned, the Report contained very useful information about staff issues and this was crucial, as staff were one of the most important resources of the Organization. GRULAC was happy to see that specific progress had been made on gender issues and welcomed the dual focus on achieving gender equality and on improving women's empowerment. It mentioned that WIPO had taken specific initiatives relating to gender and was now considering additional policies and measures, and that was a good step. GRULAC also stated that WIPO had now met the requirements of having a certain percentage of women at higher posts and that the Organization had met most of the indicators with respect to this requirement. It hoped that the slip backwards seen at the D2 and P5 level posts would be reversed in the near future. GRULAC wished to highlight the situation, which it had brought up before, with respect to the debt the Organization had towards its region in terms of geographical balance within the Organization and the way in which the specific level of staff numbers from a given region was calculated in WIPO. GRULAC recalled that the method used dated back to 1975 and was therefore outdated. GRULAC was of the view that it needed to be overhauled, by referring to general numbers by geographical region and more specifically for numbers held at the higher levels.

16. The Delegation of China thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the report and noted that the Annual Report on Human Resources had introduced WIPO's work and progress on promoting geographical representation. The Delegation was of the view that, with respect to human resources, while focusing on gender equality, WIPO should also pay attention to other important factors such as geographical representation. It hoped that WIPO could take further

effective measures to improve the Organization's geographical representation. In addition, the Delegation also hoped that WIPO's HR reporting model could draw on the good practices and experience of the UN Secretariat as well as other UN agencies.

17. The Delegation of Spain congratulated the Chair on his election as Chair of the WIPO Coordination Committee, and aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Germany on behalf of Group B. The Delegation highlighted the fact that while WIPO's staff were the essential core, and critical for carrying out all activities, the provision of services along with any available technologies, staff expenses, and the recruitment of qualified, motivated staff, as well as career development of staff in accordance with the interests of the Organization, were all key. For the Delegation, gender equality was not just another policy, but rather the foundation on which many other policies were built, and also a way of ensuring fairness and efficiency in the way human talent in the Organization was used. Therefore, it urged the Secretariat to achieve its gender equality objectives, particularly at the P5 and D2 grades. The Delegation commended the Secretariat on the appointment of Ms. Lisa Jorgenson as the Gender and IP Champion and expressed its willingness to cooperate with her on any activities considered appropriate to achieve those goals, as it had done in 2021, and so far in 2022. Regarding exchanging experience and practice, the Delegation mentioned that there should be a relationship based on synergy between Member States and WIPO, therefore it appreciated the new integral viewpoint being taken to training, which included on-the-job training in the WIPO Academy. The Delegation added that it had cooperated and continued to cooperate a good deal with the Academy, and would be happy to coordinate in this initiative as well. It also stated that the steps that had been taken to include persons with disabilities, were particularly relevant, and congratulated the Secretariat on developing its first Disability Inclusion Strategy. The Delegation highlighted the need to continue to look at the issue of flexible types of work, as the trends seen on the larger labor market indicate that not offering these possibilities when people apply for a WIPO post would make it less attractive, and therefore less able to recruit the highly qualified and talented people needed in the Organization. The Delegation urged the Secretariat to continue to push for the changes needed to keep WIPO in step with what was a major cultural and labor-related change in the world, and took the opportunity to congratulate WIPO for starting the YEP, and hoped that it would be strengthened in the future. In addition, the Delegation stated that there was no doubt that WIPO had sufficient financial and material resources to inject more ambition into the Program, as it would guarantee the viability of the common mission that the Organization was carrying out currently and intends to carry out also in the future.

18. The Delegation of Nigeria aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and extended its thanks to the Secretariat for the compilation as well as the detailed presentation of the Annual Report on Human Resources. It noted the achievements during the period covered by the report, particularly in the aspects of gender parity and the launch of the YEP. In that regard, the Delegation commended the Secretariat for having introduced the use of HR dashboards to strengthen the capacities of supervisors to manage and improve the gender and geographical representation of their workforce, amongst other benefits. Notwithstanding these developments, it was clear that Africa was still largely under-represented, pursuant to the data received by Member States on geographical distribution for 2021, and 2022, and despite the few initiatives launched by WIPO, such as the Focal Point Initiative, specific recruitment campaigns and social media outreach amongst others, to ensure equitable representation of Member States in the Organization. The Delegation stated that it had become most pertinent for WIPO to boost its pool of employees from the African Region to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce, staff that reflected the diversity of the people it served. Furthermore, it highlighted the overarching need for the Secretariat to initiate a working model to address geographical representation imbalances, which would also address the need for equitable geographical distribution of employees in the senior management level and other categories. It reiterated that those observations were dear to the Delegation, and it would subsequently evaluate tangible progress in that regard. The

Delegation proposed that the Secretariat incorporate updates on career progression and prospects for the lower staff categories in future presentations on these important administrative measures. The Delegation concluded by expressing its appreciation to HRMD on the Annual Report on Human Resources and wished to see the many concerns of the African Group addressed as appropriate in future reports.

19. The Delegation of Uganda aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and thanked the Secretariat for having prepared the Annual Report on Human Resources. The Delegation strongly supported the principle of proportionate and equitable geographical representation for staffing and stated that it had long supported a review of the 1975 Accord on Geographical Distribution, which had borne out the need to balance the geographical representation of WIPO's workforce, as developing countries were not adequately represented, especially in senior management roles.

20. The Delegation of Iraq congratulated the Chair on his election and was grateful to the Secretariat for having prepared and presented these documents. It aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of India, on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, and urged the Secretariat to bridge the gulf in terms of geographical representation between those Member States who were represented and those who were not or who were under-represented. The Delegation stated that only 2 per cent of staff of the Organization was from the Asia and the Pacific region and it believed that it was essential for the Secretariat to keep a very close eye on this question. The Delegation expressed its appreciation for the development of the YEP and was of the view that this support should also be continued, as the young were the future of the Organization. It was a positive initiative and the Delegation supported such initiatives.

21. The Delegation of Saudi Arabia thanked the Secretariat for submitting the Annual Report on Human Resources. The Delegation reiterated its desire for equitable geographical representation and the need of effective mechanisms to improve the geographical representation of staff in the Organization, whilst adding that WIPO should be able to recruit talented people wherever their origin.

22. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) congratulated the Chair on his election, and aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of India on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group. The Delegation expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for the preparation of the Annual Report on Human Resources, which included information on progress made towards staffing goals as well as an overview of the human resource-related policies, initiatives and activities of the Organization. The Delegation welcomed the continuous improvement of the Annual Report, which has established itself as a key source of information on human resources for Member States. The Delegation attached great importance to the proper administration of human resources as it directly related to organizational efficiency and service orientation, as well as resilience to confront new developments, promptly and adequately. With regard to geographical distribution of WIPO staff, despite the efforts undertaken, the Delegation was of the view that there was a huge gap in geographical representation within the Secretariat. Accordingly, while recognizing the efforts made by the Secretariat to narrow the existing gap, the Delegation stated that there was a need for further action, including the modification of the human resources policy, and devising a strategic plan or roadmap to ensure balanced geographical representation.

23. The Delegation of Ghana aligned itself with the statement made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the Annual Report on Human Resources. The Delegation expressed its appreciation for the YEP. However, based on the data contained in the 2022 HR Brochure, the Delegation wished to highlight that WIPO had a total workforce of 1,618 out of which 1,067 made up the core workforce. With respect to the latter figure, only 64 African nationals were among the professional and higher categories of staff on the regular budget, despite Africa making up more

than one quarter of WIPO Member States. The Delegation reiterated its support for the call to rectify the imbalance in the geographical representation in the Organization while expressing its appreciation for the work WIPO had already done in that regard.

24. The Delegation of Sudan extended its greetings to the Chair and thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the Annual Report on Human Resources, which included many important details. The Delegation supported the statement made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, as well as the arguments put forward regarding geographical representation and distribution amongst staff, whilst taking into consideration the gender dimension and the importance of young people.

25. The Delegation of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group, stated that it wished to propose for consideration by the WIPO Coordination Committee, a decision paragraph on the first sub-item of Agenda Item 12(i) on the Annual Report on Human Resources. The Delegation read the proposed decision paragraph as follows: "The Coordination Committee invited the Secretariat to systematically include in its annual reports on human resources detailed information on the measures taken to improve geographical balance on positions subject to geographical distribution in all sectors of WIPO and at all levels, including at higher and top levels." The Group highlighted that this proposal had been circulated to all Regional Coordinators and to Member States, and requested the Secretariat to share it on the screen in order to allow the WIPO Coordination Committee to consider the proposal.

26. The Chair thanked the Delegation of Algeria and the African Group, and requested the proposed text to be sent to the Secretariat in order to be able to put up on the screen. In the meantime, the Chair proceeded to give the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the statements made.

27. The Secretariat thanked the delegations for their statements and mentioned that it had taken due note of all the comments, especially the main concern surrounding geographical distribution of WIPO's workforce. It recognized the importance of improving geographical representation within WIPO's workforce. In addition, together with Member States, it hoped to identify concrete actions to improve representation and report on success in a year's time. The Secretariat also thanked the delegations that had reached out to engage in concrete discussions, as this partnership was important for the success in this very specific area of geographical representation. The Secretariat reiterated its commitment to increase the engagement with Member States in the course of the year, notably through the Focal Point Initiative, as well as organizing more regular meetings during the year to agree on actions in more detail and report on progress.

28. The Chair then proceeded to give all delegations enough time to read the proposal on screen, noting that this proposal had already been shared with group coordinators, but wished to give delegations another chance to read the statement in their individual capacities.

29. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, expressed its support for the proposal on the decision paragraph made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

30. The Delegation of India, speaking on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific Group, expressed its support in principle to the language contained in the decision paragraph proposed by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group and added that individual Member States may wish to highlight their respective views. The Group stood ready to engage with all Groups and Member States to reach consensus on the issue.

31. The Delegation of Nigeria supported the language proposed by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, as it reflected the concerns of the African Group, Member States and other groups within WIPO. The Delegation stated that this was underscored in the

statement delivered earlier and expressed its appreciation for the response given by the Secretariat. It was optimistic that there would be an improvement on this matter next year.

32. The Delegation of Sweden mentioned that geographical representation was important, but that gender was also a key concern for the Delegation, and that this could perhaps be added to read "to improve gender and geographical balance". The Delegation was of the view that this would cover many of the different points that were important for Member States.

33. The Chair then ensured that the concept of gender was included by the Secretariat in the proposal on screen.

34. The Delegation of China expressed its support in principle for the proposed decision paragraph made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

35. The Delegation of Zimbabwe expressed its support for the statement made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and underscored the importance of the issue of gender in the equation.

36. The Delegation of the Russian Federation expressed its support for the proposal on the decision paragraph made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and requested the Secretariat to clarify whether the language contained in the proposed decision meant that Member States would receive statistics on which Member State from which geographical region occupied which post.

37. In response to the query by the Delegation of the Russian Federation, the Secretariat stated that its proposal at this stage was to ensure discussions with all Member States and agree on the best way to project statistics that would present an evolution, and that will include how the various statistics on geographical distribution were presented. The Secretariat recalled that one of the points raised in the discussions with group coordinators was the fact that currently two separate reports were published, one on geographical distribution that was published twice a year, as well as the HR Brochure. It was of the view that it would be a great opportunity to clarify, and put everything together in a way that is much more readable for everyone.

38. The Delegation of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group, agreed to the proposal made by the Delegation of Sweden, to include gender in the decision paragraph and hoped that with this inclusion, consensus could be reached to adopt the decision.

39. The Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) supported the proposal made by the Delegation of Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and proposed to add the word "concrete" before the word "measures" contained in the proposed decision paragraph. With respect to gender, the Delegation stated that, thanks to the efforts made by the Secretariat, in its view, the goal had been reached, and the Organization was on the right track. The Delegation reiterated that the main problem was geographical balance and proposed to change the order of the wording by placing "geographical balance" first, to be followed by gender.

40. In response to the proposal by the Delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Secretariat clarified that by placing both geographical and gender balance together in the proposed decision paragraph with respect to posts subject to geographical distribution, would mean that other important posts would be excluded from the gender balance perspective. Therefore, the Secretariat suggested to include gender balance after the passage on geographical balance on posts subject to geographical distribution.

41. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for this clarification and for the suggestion, and thanked all the delegations for being creative and efficient with respect to the proposed decision by the African Group.

42. The Coordination Committee invited the Secretariat to systematically include in its Annual Report on Human Resources detailed information on the concrete measures taken to improve geographical balance on positions subject to geographical distribution, as well as gender balance, in all sectors of WIPO and at all levels, including at higher and top levels.

43. The Director General stated that he was pleased to see the Chair in this position, and took the opportunity to thank the previous Chair for her work on the WIPO Coordination Committee. The Director General mentioned that one of things that echoed and resonated in the many statements made by delegations was that people were the Organization's greatest resource. He added that, even though that sounded like a *cliché* sometimes, but in an Organization where the work was specialized and which had to reach out to the world, having good people was critical. The Director General thanked the delegations for their interest in engaging with the Secretariat and for their interest in the make-up of the people in the Organization, from both the geographical and gender perspectives, which met the expectations of Member States. As indicated by his colleagues in HRMD, this was something on which the Secretariat would work and engage with Member States very closely, and which the Secretariat had already done and would continue doing so. The Director General reiterated that this was a partnership and wished to emphasize that point, as the Secretariat would not be able to meet the expectations of Member States without both the Secretariat and Member States working closely together. The Director General also stressed that this was not just an HR issue but it was something that needed to be socialized throughout the Organization. The Director General further stated that more work would be done to ensure that the colleagues in charge of recruitment, the hiring managers and the appointment boards took it as part of their responsibility as well. The Director General concluded by reiterating his thanks to delegations for their interest in WIPO and by assuring them that the Secretariat would keep working hard with Member States to ensure that WIPO remained a great place to work with great staff.

44. The Chair thanked the Director General for his statement and reminded delegations that the WIPO Coordination Committee still needed to adopt a decision with respect to the election of a new member of the WSPC as contained in document WO/CC/81/3.

WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC)

45. The Secretariat introduced document WO/CC/81/3 on the WIPO Staff Pension Committee (WSPC) and recalled that the WIPO Coordination Committee decided at its ordinary session in 1977, that the WSPC would consist of three members and three alternate members, with one member and one alternate being elected by the WIPO Coordination Committee, noting that those selected would normally serve a four-year term of office. However, in order to establish a process that would facilitate a broader-based call for, and consideration of, the candidates presented by Member States for the eventual election of the member and the alternate member of the WSPC, by the WIPO Coordination Committee, in 2021 the terms of office for the incumbent members were reduced, exceptionally, to one and two years respectively. The Secretariat recalled that, at its ordinary session in October 2021, the WIPO Coordination Committee had elected the member of the WSPC for a one-year mandate, up to the end of the ordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2022, and the alternate member of the WSPC for a two-year mandate, up to the end of the ordinary session of the WIPO Coordination Committee in 2023, respectively. The Secretariat mentioned that, this time, the Director General was proposing a four year term of office of the newly-elected member to begin on September 1, 2022, and added that, earlier this year, a circular *note verbale* had been sent to Member States inviting them to propose candidates for the election of the member of the WSPC

for a term of office of four years. Several nominations had been received by the Director General, and after due consideration of those nominations, the Director General had decided to propose Mr. Moncef Charaabi (Tunisia), for election as member of the WSPC by the WIPO Coordination Committee for a period of four years starting September 1, 2022.

46. The WIPO Coordination Committee elected Mr. Moncef Charaabi as member of the WIPO Staff Pension Committee for the period of four years starting September 1, 2022.

(ii) Report by the Ethics Office

47. Discussions were based on document WO/CC/81/INF/2.

48. The Chief Ethics Officer introduced the “Annual Report by the Ethics Office”, and mentioned that, in 2021, the Ethics Office, as an independent office, had the privilege to continue assisting the Director General to enhance the Organization’s culture of ethics, integrity and accountability. The Chief Ethics Officer explained that the 2021 report presented the work of the Ethics Office relative to providing confidential advice and guidance to WIPO personnel, awareness raising and training, standard-setting and policy development, and implantation of policies assigned to the Office. Regarding confidential advice and guidance, the Chief Ethics Officer noted that in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ethics Office responded to 53 requests for advice using mostly remote means of communication. The largest category, 15 requests, was for ethics advice relating to outside activities and employment. On protection against retaliation, the Chief Ethics Officer explained that the Ethics Office handled one inquiry, which did not proceed into a formal request for protection. Regarding the annual financial disclosure program, the Chief Ethics Officer explained that it is a tool to help staff identify and address conflict-of-interest in the best interest of WIPO and noted that, again in 2021, 100 per cent compliance was achieved. Regarding the additional disclosure requirements for the most senior staff of the Organization under the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the Secretariat stated that 100 per cent compliance was also recorded. The Chief Ethics Officer further explained that the Ethics Office had delivered a town hall presentation to raise awareness of the work and mandate of the Office, and noted that the participation of the Ethics Office in town hall meetings had been supported by numerous reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and was considered a powerful and cost-effective way for executive heads to get the ethics message across while at the same time demonstrating their personal commitment to the function. Finally, the Chief Ethics Officer stated that throughout 2021, the Ethics Office engaged actively with the WIPO Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC), and regularly attended quarterly meetings. Looking ahead, the Chief Ethics Officer noted that the Ethics Office will continue to work with other offices in fulfilling its mandate while maintaining its independence and that the Ethics Office was committed to nurturing a culture of ethics and integrity in WIPO to enable fulfill our mission the ‘right way’.

49. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Chair and also congratulated him on his election. Group B thanked the Secretariat for the Annual Report by the Ethics Office and the Chief Ethics Officer for her presentation. Group B noted that the Ethics Office was an indispensable part of WIPO and helped to ensure a working environment characterized by ethics. Group B also stated that the provision of confidential advice to all WIPO personnel was a critical component of its mandate. Group B noted that there had been a noticeable increase in requests for confidential advice and guidance since September 2021, and encouraged the Ethics Office to carefully monitor that increase. Group B also noted that, in that regard, Group B supported the efforts of the Ethics Office to better inform its strategy and to report more efficiently and consistently on the ethical maturity within WIPO. Group B thanked the Ethics Office for its valuable work and stated that it looked forward to the continued key and active role that the Ethics Office played in the Organization.

50. The Delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Chair and congratulated him on his election and wished him success in the discharge of his responsibilities. Turning to the agenda item, the Delegation thanked the Secretariat for submitting the Annual Report by the Ethics Office and expressed appreciation for the Director General's efforts to ensure the highest possible standards of ethics and integrity in the Secretariat as provided for by the Convention, the founding document of WIPO, the standards of civil service, the staff rules and regulations, the WIPO code of ethics and relevant policies and procedures. The Delegation believed it important that the work in that direction be continued so as to ensure the best quality of results from the work done in various areas of WIPO's activity. The Delegation cited as an example, that in 2021, the Ethics Office provided confidential advice and guidance on 53 cases, which were mainly related to comments of reports on behavior at work, including allegations of inappropriate conduct, harassment or bullying and unfair policy application. The Delegation opined that, it would be helpful if in future reports of the Ethics Office, the Secretariat provided comparative statistics on requests made, for example to show how many requests were in previous years that would enable Member States to see the dynamic behind the emergence of problem areas. The Delegation believed it was important that the Secretariat continue to apply the provisions in accordance with its mandate.

51. The Delegation of Mexico thanked the Chair, congratulated him on his appointment and reiterated its commitment to support the Chair in his new role. The Delegation indicated that it was grateful for the presentation of the report and noted its contents. The Delegation expressed its support for the official responsible for the Ethics Office and hoped that the work would be carried out on the principles of integrity and confidentiality, and therefore serve to promote ethics based on the shared principles as well as respect for human rights, integrity, and appropriate conduct etc. The Delegation noted that since the arrival of the new Chief Ethics Officer, there had been changes in the Office and that has been welcomed, particularly with respect with the ethical behavior of the Organization. The Delegation expressed that it hoped she would continue to take initiatives to improve communication, monitoring and accountability. Finally, it noted that the Secretariat attached importance to the Office and so did the Delegation, and it hoped the Office would be given the necessary resources to carry out its work properly.

52. The Delegation of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group, thanked the Chair and expressed its gratitude to the Secretariat for the preparation of the Annual Report by the Ethics Office. The Group underscored the importance of the work of the Ethics Office in promoting a safe working environment free from bullying or harassment, and in preventing possible reprisals. The Group stated that unfortunately, the Ethics Office does not actually have sufficient human resources in its opinion, and encouraged the Secretariat to strengthen the Office by providing it with more staff to enable it discharge its responsibilities much better. The Group noted that it was important because there had been an increase in the number of cases and requests for advice made to the Office.

53. The Delegation of the United States of America thanked the Chair and congratulated him on his election. The Delegation also thanked the Ethics Office for the report and presentation. The Delegation aligned itself with the statement of Group B, and said that it was encouraged on the reporting of progress on the policy for preventing retaliation and the valuable strides to launching the first e-learning module. The Delegation appreciated that the online Ethics and Integrity training was mandatory for all staff and that additional initiatives are employed to familiarize new staff with WIPO's culture of ethics. It welcomed any new information on the Ethics Office's work to introduce mandatory refresher courses in line with the JIU report of May 2021.

54. The Delegation of China thanked the Chair and congratulated him on his election. The Delegation also thanked the Secretariat for providing the report of the Ethics Office. The Delegation stated that it was of the view that the work of the Ethics Office was of significant

importance, and it had noticed the great progress achieved by the Office. The Delegation hoped that the Ethics Office would continue to play its key role at WIPO.

55. The Delegation of Canada thanked the Chair and welcomed the new Chief Ethics Officer and their commitment to ensuring that WIPO fosters an organizational culture of ethics based on shared values of independence, loyalty, impartiality, integrity and accountability and respect for human rights. The Delegation noted the increased number of requests for advice and guidance since the new Chief Ethics Officer joined WIPO, which it considers speak to her leadership and her team. The Delegation welcomed the Office's active engagement with the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations on efforts to promote system wide collaboration on ethics-related issues.

56. The Chief Ethics Officer thanked all the delegations for their comments and words of encouragement. Responding to the question raised by the Delegation of the Russian Federation, the Chief Ethics Officer stated that she agreed that comparative statistics would be useful going forward, and that was something that would be reflected in future reports of the Ethics Office. With regard to the question raised by the Delegation of the United States of America, the Chief Ethics Officer informed that the JIU had recently recommended mandatory refreshers, but that WIPO was at a stage where it needed to walk before running. The focus, therefore, would first be on revising the mandatory ethics training and rolling it out across WIPO to achieve 100 per cent compliance, following which the focus would shift to refreshers next year. The Chief Ethics Officer also took note of the statements made by some delegations on the human resources for the Ethics Office and assured that management had been listening to requests in that area and certainly, a solution would be found to having the proper staffing for the increase in requests to the Ethics Office. The Chief Ethics Officer noted that indeed the increase was representative of the confidence that staff had in the Office, and also their integrity in coming forward to request clarifications as well. The Chief Ethics Officer concluded that WIPO was an Organization where people wanted to do the right thing, and noted that it was important not to lose the momentum and to be able to support staff to do that.

57. The Director General recalled that he had spoken earlier about WIPO being a great place to work with great people inside. He stated that part of that was making sure that colleagues knew that they had to do the right thing and they knew how to do the right thing. The Director General stated that he was very pleased that Ms. Jovanie Philogène joined WIPO last year, as the Chief Ethics Officer. The Director General explained that she was reporting on the work since she joined, covering three quarters of the year, and that he hoped that with the Member States' cooperation and the seriousness with which the Organization takes those issues, they see a very good report with suggestions from various Member States. The Director General explained that this was a WIPO that believes in ethics, because it was so critical to building trust among Member States as well as amongst the staff. He added that it was critical in making sure the Organization was able to do the work it needed to do in the 'right way' so that it was not just achieving results, but achieving results in a way that upholds these standards. The Director General assured that Member States had the continued commitment of the administration and all of his colleagues in paying attention to that issue. He further explained that that was not a topic for HR or just a topic for the Chief Ethics Officer, it was a topic that needed to be owned by everyone in WIPO and that was the direction in which the Secretariat was hoping to take the Organization. The Director General reiterated, as the Chief Ethics Officer mentioned, that the Secretariat had to make sure it could walk before it runs, and it needed to keep building, as even running was a never-ending journey. The Director General looked forward to working with the Chief Ethics Officer and all the Member States to keep advancing the issue and thanked everyone.

ITEM 13 OF THE CONSOLIDATED AGENDA

AMENDMENTS TO STAFF REGULATIONS AND RULES

58. Discussions were based on document WO/CC/81/2.

59. The Secretariat introduced document WO/CC/81/2 entitled “Amendments to Staff Regulations and Rules (SRR)” and stated that amendments to the Staff Regulations were presented to the WIPO Coordination Committee’s for its prior approval, whilst amendments to the Staff Rules were approved by the Director General and were being presented to the WIPO Coordination Committee only for information. The Secretariat mentioned that this year, amendments to 32 Staff Regulations were being submitted to the WIPO Coordination Committee for its approval, with some amendments aimed at removing the references to Office Instructions throughout the Staff Regulations. The objective was to give WIPO the required flexibility to select the appropriate instrument, limit the use of Office Instructions for high-level policies and strategies, as well as to streamline WIPO’s regulatory framework. The proposed amendments were also aligned with the SRR of other organizations of the UN common system. The Secretariat added that other amendments aimed to remove the references to permanent appointments and clarify that such appointments may only be granted, as a transitional measure, to a limited number of staff. The Secretariat informed the WIPO Coordination Committee that the most substantive amendment concerned the Special Post Allowance (SPA), where it was proposed notably to set out in the Regulation the principle (as in other organizations of the UN common system) that staff were expected to assume for short periods, as a normal part of their customary work and without extra compensation, the duties and responsibilities of higher-graded posts. It was further proposed, among other things, to move some of the current provisions to a new Staff Rule, with the objective of giving the Administration more flexibility regarding the payment of the SPA, including by allowing derogations to be made where appropriate in the interest of staff, in particular, with the requirement for the higher-graded post to be “vacant” removed. The Secretariat clarified that this requirement prevented the payment of the SPA in situations where it would otherwise be justified, for example, when a staff member had to perform the duties and responsibilities of a higher-graded post whose incumbent was on extended sick leave. In addition, the amended provision would make the payment of the SPA conditional on the staff member’s satisfactory performance. It also highlighted that the condition that the SPA was only payable after three consecutive months of service at the higher grade would remain unchanged. With respect to Staff Rules, the Secretariat stated that amendments to 24 Staff Rules other than those contained in Chapter VII on “Travel and Removal Expenses” were being reported to the WIPO Coordination Committee for information. It added that Chapter VII of the SRR had been reviewed in its entirety as part of a broader effort to streamline WIPO’s regulatory framework and that the amendments to the relevant Staff Rules on travel and removal expenses were also being reported to the WIPO Coordination Committee for information.

60. The Delegation of Germany, speaking on behalf of Group B, thanked the Director General for having prepared document WO/CC/81/2 setting out the amendments to the SRR. Group B had taken note of the proposed amendments and was pleased to see further amendments that provided staff more flexibility, for example regarding leave for family-related emergencies. It also appreciated the deletion of the time limit for the submission of harassment complaints to the IOD. Group B also took note, with respect to the interpretation of the SRR, of the proposal to replace Office Instructions with administrative issuances by the Director General and that it understood that this information would continue to be made available to employees in the future. It was of the view that, regardless of the terminology, it was important to ensure transparent information channels for employees. Group B once again thanked the Director General for having given the opportunity to review this document and approve the amendments to Staff Regulations contained therein.

61. The Delegation of the Russian Federation thanked the Director General for having prepared the SRR, and supported the initiative of the WIPO Coordination Committee to review them. In the Delegation's view, these amendments fell within the framework of the future review of the SRR, which would enable WIPO to retain a solid normative basis and to quickly adapt to the change in requirements and priorities of the Organization, while at the same time allow it to be in line with leading practice in the general UN System. It believed that the proposed amendments to the SRR would also enhance the effectiveness of the Organization as a whole. At the same time, the Delegation wished to stress that the qualifications of candidates and geographical representation should have a fundamental importance in the decision-making relating to appointments within the Organization.

62. The Secretariat thanked the Delegation of the Russian Federation for its comments and assured the Delegation that it would of course continue to work on streamlining and making WIPO's SRR more efficient.

63. The WIPO Coordination Committee:

(i) approved the amendments to the Staff Regulations as provided in Annex I, document WO/CC/81/2; and

(ii) noted the amendments to the Staff Rules as provided in Annexes II, III and IV, document WO/CC/81/2.

[Annex¹ follows]

¹ It is customary practice that, upon request, the Chair allows a representative of the WIPO Staff Council to address members of the WIPO Coordination Committee after the conclusion of its agenda in order to provide the perspectives of staff. The Chair informed that he would follow the precedent set forth with the agreement of the Member States, and so he proceeded. The statement of the representative of the Staff Council is annexed.

**Statement by the WIPO Staff Council to the Coordinating Committee of Member States
of the World Intellectual Property Organization**
July 20, 2022, Geneva

Your Excellencies,
Mister Chair,
Director General,
Delegates and
Dear WIPO colleagues,

It is a great honor to address the Coordination Committee today on behalf of the WIPO Staff Council. My name is Sherine Greiss and I speak today for all six Members of the WIPO Staff Council.

We are pleased with our dialogue with Director General Tang and his team, which continues to be frank, transparent, healthy and marked by good will.

The years 2020 and 2021 may have physically kept us distant, but the unprecedented crisis brought the senior leadership and Staff Council Representatives together to act in harmony for the well-being of all personnel. Now as we transition back to our “new normal”, it is important to remember the lessons learned over the last two years and continue to develop better ways of working.

From the outset, WIPO staff have shown extraordinary resilience in adapting to new working conditions. They have maintained a high level of service quality and productivity, enabling WIPO, as always, to remain at the forefront of promoting intellectual property (IP) rights and generating substantial financial assets and income.

The Staff Council appreciates the efforts exerted by the Crisis Management Team in efficiently and effectively handling this difficult period and maintaining the communication channel open for the Staff Council to share any feedback or concerns of staff while keeping us regularly informed of the measures to be taken.

This flexibility and adaptability of staff shows that the real asset of WIPO is its human capital. We are proud of staff for their strength, effort and determination to maintain the Organization’s pre-eminent position in the world of IP, despite the daunting challenges of the pandemic.

To maintain its position, WIPO must continue to invest in and support its staff who produce this success. Outstanding results require outstanding people. We call on the WIPO Administration to continue its efforts to support, develop, and empower staff across the entire Organization.

In order to do so, the continuous support of all Member States to WIPO to provide staff with fair and equitable working conditions and a more agile working environment is very important in maintaining a dynamic and motivated workforce, and in attracting the best talent.

The WIPO Staff Council is following with interest - and a measure of concern – discussions on the Geneva post adjustment issue within the ICSC. The annual inflation rate in Switzerland, according to the Switzerland Consumer Index (CPI), was 3.4 by the end of June 2022, the highest since 1993, and is forecast to continue to increase. We recognize this situation is not unique to Geneva, but we appeal to Member States to support WIPO staff in at minimum maintaining our current salaries/post adjustment.

Recruiting the specialized skills needed by an organization like WIPO remains a challenge and likely even more so as we move forward with new posts of 5-year limited term. We know that similar organizations such as the EPO, OECD, the World Bank and others who compete for many of the same skill sets as WIPO offer higher salaries.

Since our last statement before this Committee, we witnessed several initiatives taken by the Administration to further improve internal communication and engagement with staff that benefit the entire Organization. Town Hall and Management Meetings as well as Development Coordination Huddles have been regularly taking place with the DG; several task forces and thematic working groups have been developed including staff from all levels. This has created a more inclusive working environment and strengthened corporate cohesion.

WIPO Staff Council has taken due note of and appreciates HR's new Strategy, which sets out goals for addressing key human resource challenges in WIPO. The Employee Engagement Survey with 60% response rate is the first step in strengthening everyone's engagement within the Organization. The results show that while the overall sentiment on *purpose* is generally positive, on *career opportunities*, the sentiment is generally negative. According to the responses, staff are discouraged by the lack of upward and horizontal mobility and opportunities to grow in technical knowledge.

According to HR, the data collected will assist in identifying focus areas and actions, which need to be taken to improve our work environment and to energize our teams.

Career Development

In the area of career development, staff expectations remain high. These include expectations that excellent work that brings successful results, when combined with increasing responsibilities at a higher level will be recognized and rewarded through promotion opportunities.

The Staff Council is aware of staff concerns of unfairness, explicit or implicit bias, based on gender, as well as geographical representation and age, which affect any career growth prospects.

Building a truly inclusive workplace requires a long-term approach with everyone sharing the responsibility. We hope to see concrete actions to address this, to make staff feel that hiring is fair and inclusive; to redress the current imbalances in our work force; to develop more family-friendly policies; to achieve balanced gender and geographical representation and to leverage the existing talent within the Organization.

The WSC notes the concerns raised by some Member States at the Program and Budget Committee of high rate of internal recruitment. That said, we are hearing concerns from staff as well who are saying that the percentage of external recruitment is considerably high, limiting opportunities for promotion of internal candidates, especially for competent and long serving staff members.

In reviewing the data, we found that during the period January 2021 to April 2022,

- At the D1/D2: 80% of advertised posts were filled by external candidates;
- At the P5 level: 78% of advertised posts were filled by external candidates;
- At the P4 level: 60% of advertised posts were filled by external candidates;
- At P2/P3 level: 57% of advertised posts were filled by external candidates;
- At G5/G6 posts: 43% of advertised posts were filled by external candidates.

The data speaks for itself - the higher the grade of the post, the more external candidates are considered. This is creating frustrations for staff who have spent many years serving this Organization and the larger UN System.

Without prejudice to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels – which of course is also needed – many sister organizations have taken concrete steps to ensure that full regard is given to qualifying internal staff in filling vacancies. This is expressly stipulated in their Staff Regulations and Rules. Others limit the eligibility of certain posts to internal candidates. Others have created committees that review all vacancies and provide recommendations to the SG/DG on whether posts should be advertised externally or not.

The Staff Council would like to see concrete similar actions taken to address the above in order to further boost staff morale and dedication to the Organization. This is of course also beneficial to the Member States that we serve.

The Staff Council also wishes to draw the attention of Member States to a number of additional issues that affect mental health and well-being of colleagues. These include concerns about the uncertainty of the present pandemic, the excessively high rent in the area on both sides of the Franco-Swiss border, the extremely limited availability of childcare spots and their exorbitant cost in the Lake Geneva area.

Lack of Accessible and Affordable Childcare, Contributing to Gender Inequalities

Although the updated parental leave policy brought a long-awaited step towards gender and family equality, many staff—disproportionately female staff—continue to struggle to balance competing professional commitments with childcare and family demands. Female staff, more so than male staff, tend to forego their careers or significantly reduce working hours to fill in the gap between the end of parental leave and start of school, further contributing to gender inequalities.

It is worth mentioning that a recent UNICEF study ranked Switzerland as one of the lowest among the world's high-income countries in the accessibility, affordability and quality of childcare. On affordability, Switzerland ranked dead last.

The UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity recommends Organizations to ensure on-site childcare availability or a percentage reimbursement of daycare costs where there is no facility. Achieving gender equality requires a holistic approach and family-friendly policies such as adequate child allowance, and affordable access to pre-school care and education. We ask you to support WIPO in upholding its commitment to promote gender equality. As

WIPO raises the standards on equality, inclusivity and diversity, the innovative and creative sectors and the wider IP community benefit.

We are encouraged by the general direction taken by the Administration and hope that careful attention will be given to the above concerns of staff. Notable improvements have already been implemented, such as flexible working arrangements, including the possibility to combine teleworking with on-site work. Staff welcome those measures and are fully convinced that this new relationship of trust will make staff work to the best of their abilities and benefit the performance of daily business.

We are thankful to the Director General's teams for taking into account the Staff Council's concerns and proposals. We thank as well the Human Resources Management Department for taking into account our recommendations.

Before concluding, we would like to express our gratitude to the Director General for his sincere desire to dialogue with staff and his work to improve many long-standing issues. The change in culture at WIPO is noticeable and positive. The open communication and mutual respect are key characteristics of our current relationship. The Administration's approach to treat staff as partners and find agreeable solutions is also very welcome. IP is central to the global economy as reflected in our financial results, as it drives economic growth and competition and protects creators and innovators around the world.

While many positive changes have already taken place, much work remains to be done as mentioned above. Many initiatives have been agreed to and promises made in principle, but the difficult work of implementing them fairly and consistently across the Organization awaits. The Staff Council counts on WIPO management to address these important issues in the near future with your support.

The Staff Council is committed to continue its work for the benefit of all staff, with great availability and profound respect for the great responsibility entrusted to them. We will continue exerting every effort to ensure that a fair and equitable working environment and the well-being of staff will continue to be the top priority for all stakeholders. We are committed to seeing WIPO remain as the Organization of choice for attracting and recruiting highly qualified talent while preserving, promoting and supporting the career development of staff already on board.

We thank you for your attention and the opportunity to address you today on behalf of all staff.

[End of Annex and of document]