

UK Statement to the WIPO General Assembly on behalf of Group B countries

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the United Kingdom has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Group B.

Mr Chair, at the outset, Group B would like to thank you and vice-chairs for your continued leadership as chair of the General Assembly. We would also like to thank the WIPO Secretariat for the extraordinary efforts making these Assemblies possible. We reiterate that the first and foremost priority must be the health and safety of all involved. At the same time, we stress the importance of taking forward WIPO's intergovernmental work.

Mr Chair, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the social and economic wellbeing of people around the world. We would like to express our deepest condolences to colleagues and families of those staff who tragically passed away in recent months. We appreciate the work of WIPO to support the responses to the pandemic, including the WIPO COVID-19 Search Facility, the WIPO policy tracker, the WIPO crisis management dashboard and the uninterrupted provision of the WIPO Services. Collecting lessons learned from this unprecedented period will be an important exercise going forward.

Mr Chair, Group B would like to take this opportunity to thank wholeheartedly Director General Dr Francis Gurry for his leadership and his commitment to the international IP community and this organisation in particular. His report is a testament to all that has been achieved. We wish him all the very best in all his future endeavours.

Group B would also like to warmly welcome the Director General appointee Mr Daren Tang. We look forward to working closely with him during his mandate to advance WIPO's essential contribution to international IP ecosystem.

Mr Chair, Group B sees the current period as a time to reflect on our key objectives.

First, we reiterate the importance of strengthening all WIPO's registration and classification systems in order to ensure their proper functioning and to encourage their growth.

Second, we recall the importance of digital transformation to bring the WIPO services closer to enterprises globally.

Third, new technologies are presenting new questions about the role of IP in incentivising and enabling innovation and creativity. WIPO should actively continue to advance the international discussion on IP and artificial intelligence, and other emerging areas of technology. We would also like to

see WIPO taking a leading role in discussions where IP has a direct link with other policy areas, including climate change, trade, sustainable development, and health.

Fourth, we would like to stress the importance of good governance structures for WIPO, including independent oversight bodies and adherence to the UN common system and JIU recommendations. We reiterate that the WIPO results-based management is state of the art and advise further focus on results across the organisation. Internal processes – from decision-making through to back office functions, and staff satisfaction and morale – should not be immune from independent scrutiny.

In closing, Mr Chair, please rest assured that you may count on constructive contributions from Group B. I thank you, Chair.