

# الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

RÉPUBLIQUE ALGÉRIENNE DÉMOCRATIQUE ET POPULAIRE

MISSION PERMANENTE  
AUPRÈS DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES  
ET DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES  
EN SUISSE



البعثة الدائمة  
لدى مكتب الأمم المتحدة  
والمنظمات الدولية بسويسرا

## ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES OF WIPO

General Assembly, thirty-fifth (17th extraordinary) session  
Geneva, 31 March, 2008

Statement of Ambassador Idriss Jazairy  
On behalf of the African Group

Geneva, 31 March, 2008

Mr. President,

Mr. Director General,

We associate you, Mr. President and Mr. Director General in our common admiration for the way you have lead out of the difficulties of the last General Assembly.

We are assembled here today in an extraordinary session to adopt the budget of WIPO for 2008-2009 as recommended by the Programme and Budget Committee in September 2007 and the African Group supports these adoption. Any item not related to the purpose for which the meeting is held cannot be the subject of decisions, for such decisions are to be taken at a regular session of the General Assembly.

The acceptance by the African Group of the proposal to accept the 5% reduction of PCT fees as from 1 January 2009 was a further important concession made by the African Group to obtain endorsement of the budget by this Assembly. We are happy that in the wake of this decision the developing countries in the broad sense will see the fees reduced from 75% to 90%.

There have been attempts to introduce in our deliberations issues irrelevant to the Programme and Budget. The African Group and several others have opposed this attempt in view of the specificity of the extraordinary General Assembly which brings us together today.

We have finally reached an understanding that the only decisions to be taken at this Assembly pertain to the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

We hope that all Member States will honour this understanding so as not derail a smooth evolution of our deliberations, such derailment being the unavoidable result if good faith does not prevail throughout.

WIPO has evolved from an office of less than a 100 staff in Bern to a thriving specialized agency which is a jewel in the crown of Geneva with over 1200 staff committed to the service of Member States. To all of the staff and to their leader, Director General Kamel Idris, the members of the African Group pay tribute for further enhancing the quality and professionalism of the Organization.

This effective leadership of WIPO was recognised by all States through their unanimous re-election of the incumbent. The Director General, to whom we are most grateful, has chosen to relinquish his position by October 2008 and has cooperated effectively with Member States in ensuring a smooth process for the selection of his successor. He has thus made a valuable contribution to the healing process after our divisive General Assembly of September 2007. All of those are subject to the same obligation of cooperation with intergovernmental bodies and to the same ethical behaviour. These should be no selectively in this regard. If concerns are expressed on transition measures in particular, they should apply to all heads of agencies and programme in Geneva, who are leaving this year and not only to WIPO. We look forward therefore to having similar assurances by such other departing heads as have been heard from the Director General of WIPO.

As we prepare to engage in the election, we will do our best to ensure that we choose a candidate who can build on the valuable legacy of Director General Kamel Idris and uphold the independence of the Secretariat from outside pressure which tends to rise as WIPO becomes an increasingly important actor in the international arena.

In the meantime the African Group considers that the current incumbent himself should be left to pursue his constitutional duties unhindered by any political pressure. The African Group values the independence of the Director General which should be respected by all Member States as is the case for all other Heads of UN Agencies and Programmes.

Any other course of action would cast a long shadow on the future of the Organization, undermining the healing process under way and indeed the very concept of International Civil Service which is a fundamental constituent of Multilateralism.