

Draft of Group B General Statement

Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO
44th Series of Meetings
March 31, 2008

1. Thank you Mr. Chairman. First, on behalf of Group B, let me express our great admiration and warmly congratulate you, Mr Chairman, for your stewardship in creating the proper conditions and positive atmosphere for convening this extraordinary session of the General Assembly. I personally and on behalf of Group B would like to say publicly that you, Mr. Ambassador, have been a model and an exemplar of integrity, dignity and probity of sound judgement in bringing together all of the genuine, heartfelt positions of various groups so that a productive way forward can be achieved and which is at hand today, and we thank you for that, sir. We are confident that you will continue to ably and justly guide our discussions as we move towards adoption of WIPO's Program and Budget for 2008/2009 later today.
2. Let me also extend Group B's thanks to the WIPO International Bureau for its hard work in preparing for this meeting and in assembling the documents presented to us today.
3. We are gathered to approve WIPO's Program & Budget for 2008/09. We note that the budget we are being called on to approve is a *transitional* budget. First, the Program & Budget Committee's recommendations (contained in document A/43/12) note that revisions will be needed to implement the agreed proposals relating to a WIPO Development Agenda, and in light of decisions taken by the PCT Union Assembly in respect of PCT fees, and decisions relating to the report on the desk-to-desk assessment. Indeed, the decision we are taking commits us to revising the 2008/09 Program & Budget in less than six months. Second, WIPO today is in the midst of a transition of leadership, which, as with all such transitions, will likely entail further revisions to the program & budget.
4. We would like to record our appreciation for the manner in which Director General has paved the way for his successor to take office on October 1, 2008. We further laud his wisdom to leave significant restructuring or reorganization decisions, and promotions to and within the Special Category, to WIPO's Senior Management Team (SMT). We

understand that the SMT has decided to defer such actions to the new Director General. In this way, WIPO's Director General and senior management team have shown an exemplary commitment to the greater good of WIPO in adopting the model of Dr. Idris' own entry into office in 1997 to ensure a similarly smooth transition for his successor.

5. This commendable commitment by the Director General provides the basis upon which Group B members can ^{not} join the consensus to approve the transitional Program and Budget for 2008/09.

6. Looking ahead, Group B wishes also to take note of the excellent choice offered WIPO member states by a field of 15 distinguished candidates for Director General from all corners of the globe. We urge all member states to exercise care in the selection process, respecting the dignity of the candidates and the integrity of WIPO as an international institution.

7. Speaking directly to WIPO staff members: Group B also wishes to pay special tribute to WIPO's staff for your collective commitment to excellence and to building WIPO's future. Group B is determined to ensure that WIPO staff are treated with respect, dignity, and in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards, and enjoy the full protection and benefits they are due as employees of the UN system.

8. In that light, we commend WIPO for participating in the UN Chief Executives Board's discussions on expanding the new UN Ethics Committee and urge accelerated consultations with the UN Secretary General to bring WIPO into full compliance with the new UN-wide Ethics Code as soon as possible.

9. Our message to all WIPO stakeholders is to assure you, Mr. Chairman, that Group B is strongly committed to working with you, and with WIPO's member states, staff, and the citizens, enterprises and organizations around the globe who rely on WIPO's services, to doing all we can to fully realize WIPO's tremendous potential. WIPO has a vital and unique role to play in promoting innovation, in helping countries to improve their intellectual property systems, and in promoting intellectual property protection as a tool for economic development that we all seek for all the nations of the world.

10. Group B is and will remain fully and constructively engaged in helping to build WIPO's future as an exemplary leader of the UN system, committed to robustly upholding the highest ideals embodied in the UN Charter.

11. Thank you, Mr. Chair.