

Input from WIPO to the HLPF on Sustainable Development in July 2023:

- a. WIPO, as a specialized agency of the United Nations on Intellectual Property matters, in addition to SDG 9, it concentrates its efforts on mobilizing innovation and technology as part of the solutions to a number of cross-cutting SDGs, notably the ones subject to discussions at the next HLPF, SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, as SDG 9 has a transversal effect on almost all other 16 SDGs.

The areas of inequality highlighted by the UN SDGs require innovative solutions, in particular the societal and economic challenges faced due to climate change, in addition to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on everyone's lives, the global food crisis and rising geopolitical tensions.

The UN has long recognized the link between the achievement of SDGs and technology, in addition to many other factors, as evidenced by its organization of its annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum).

Intellectual Property is certainly to be a vital contributor to achieving a higher level of sustainability, due to its characteristics, which include the lack of physical substance, its role in supporting innovation, its contributions to the innovation system and, above all, its high level of international acceptance and conformity.

In view of the above, many synergies can be found between the work carried out by WIPO with SDGs 6, 7, 11 and 17, the latter with the administration of treaties which harmonize protection and provide efficient ways to extend and to enforce IP. The first of such international treaties dates back to 1891, which provided for the international cooperation and registration of trademarks within its member States.

- b. Surely a sustainable financing and circulation of funds, human resources and technologies among industry, governments and academia is mostly needed so as to inspire innovation through interactive harmonization and cooperation. These are critical areas which WIPO tackles with WIPO's international treaties which establish and facilitate to a great extent protection within WIPO Member States, in addition to the extensive programs WIPO implements on Quality Education (SDG4).

National systems of innovation produce a large amount and variety of technologies which offer part of the solutions to central areas of the SDGs such as water, energy, urban development, food security, and protection of natural resources and diversity. In particular, the urgent climate action required both within adaptation and mitigation has and is spurring new innovative solutions. For example in water management, we observe rapid development of monitoring and early warning systems based on advanced sensor data from satellites, drones and in-situ sensors. New sensors and water management systems can drastically reduce water lost in old distribution networks in urban areas, and nature-based solutions can offer viable protection against both flooding and lack of water.

In energy the necessary transition away from fossil fuels has already led to rapid development and uptake of new solutions, not least in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and advanced network management. In relation to food security, the agricultural sector is presented with a plethora of new options, many based on information technology coupled with advanced sensor systems and automated tools. Development of stress tolerant plant varieties, bio-based inputs, and technologies and systems to minimize food loss and waste are gaining ground.

However, often simpler solutions are needed and may be more affordable and feasible to implement for farmers, not least smallholders. Worldwide, farmers face increasing uncertainties due to climate change which may reinforce the barriers for adoption of new advanced and often costly solutions. In developing countries, many locally adapted affordable solutions are developed, but they are less visible to the international community. For various contexts, there is

a need for identifying the barriers for deployment of new solutions in terms of proving their technical feasibility, in terms of illustrating their potential, and not least in making them affordable. This also includes new ways to access credit and other types of financing.

The intellectual property rights system is directly supporting the national systems of innovation, and patenting system makes publicly available an immense body of technological information and knowledge. This knowledge can be the basis for further innovation and adaptation of solutions worldwide.

- c. As far as examples of specific actions taken to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the WIPO publication 2021 Global Innovation Index (GII) report showed that investment in innovation has been resilient during the COVID-19 crisis and even reached peaks in some sectors and regions. When the pandemic hit, it was unclear what its impact would be on innovation. However, throughout 2020, key indicators of innovation investment continued to increase. The impact, on the other hand, has been hugely uneven across industry.

In addition, in October 2021, WIPO launched its COVID-19 Response Package with three million Swiss Francs dedicated to the implementation of technical assistance activities related to post-pandemic economic recovery, building back better and future pandemic preparedness.

The COVID-19 Response Package is a Member State driven package and aims to address specific country-level priorities as they evolve, facilitating the effective use of IP and ensuring the functioning of enabling IP ecosystems, as tools for sustainable development and catalysts for accelerated progress towards multiple SDG targets. This will involve working closely with Member States as well as with the UN System, and new partners, constituencies and stakeholders, to deliver results-driven projects that impact the lives of people and communities, including indigenous communities, youth, women and SMEs, particularly in developing and least developed countries.

To-date, over 40 Member States from all WIPO regions have requested or have already benefited from technical assistance and support under the package, including activities related to the provision of IP policy and legislative advice, training and capacity building, innovation support and technology transfer, and IP dispute resolution.

- d. As mentioned above, the national systems of innovation are producing new solutions which can be directly applied to the implementation of the SDGs. In many cases, the solutions are there, but they are not being deployed at the speed of which they are needed. This may be due to a lack of knowledge of the technical and economic feasibility of new solutions as well as other factors hindering deployment. In particular, demonstration of the potential of new solutions as well as new ways of funding their implementation is likely to have significant effects. The intellectual property rights system facilitates innovation and the transfer of technologies, not least the many solutions required in developing countries. As new ways to innovate, produce and consume develop, innovative ways of protecting intellectual property rights may also develop, and WIPO is actively exploring and contributing to the future of the intellectual property rights systems.
- e. The recognition of the critical role IP plays as a powerful tool in generating technological and innovative solutions in support for sustainable development, including job creation, investments, business growth and more generally economic and social development.

The importance of increasing efforts to close the gender gap in STI by encouraging the participation of women in IP and innovation for building capacity and skills on IP among women entrepreneurs as well as young people and the institutions that support them is critical at a time when the world is in dire need to advance or bolster STI solutions for the SDGS.

To conclude, through greater investment in research and development, through innovation, through a broader use of the intellectual property system, through the strengthening of the IP

system as a whole, the areas of inequalities identified in each of the 17 SDGs, will serve as a key contributor to the improvements in sustainability and to come closer to the targets established by the UN 2030 Agenda.