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**Note on ITU's pre-conference Event for the Fourth United Nations Conference
on Least Developed Countries**

Geneva March 8 and 9 2011

Knowledge and technology can be used as a tool to combat poverty because of the contribution they can make to sustained economic growth, enhanced market efficiency and the creation of employment opportunities. In this context, their application in industry, agriculture, health, education and services is critical. Building technical and scientific capacity that will allow least developed countries to meet their social and economic challenges requires the participation of a range of players from individuals to institutions, including inventors, creators, research and development (R&D) centers, academic institutions, manufacturing enterprises, agricultural organizations and health services.

Regulatory, legal and administrative policies have an influence on these players and on their interactions, which in turn determine how knowledge, technology and resources flow among them.

This will also require stronger multilateralism, including delivery on the agreed Millennium development goals, the Brussels Program of Action and preparing the deliverables for the Fourth United Nations Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011. In this context, WIPO works very closely with the Office of the High Representative for LDCs and Secretary General of the Conference. WIPO also works very closely with ITU, WTO, UNCTAD, FAO and ITC and regional organizations in so many areas to assist LDCs. The Pre-conference event of WIPO for LDCs IV was held in Geneva on 14 and 15 February 2011.

In LDCs where agriculture has a comparative advantage, the use of scientific and IP-related technical information could help increase food production, for example through better soil management, efficient irrigation and the cultivation of high-yield crops with enhanced nutrition value. It could also play a pivotal role in meeting health-related development objectives, i.e. those relating to drugs, vaccines, diagnostic systems, access to medical information and systems for monitoring drug quality, all of which are indispensable in the fight against infant mortality and maternal health, malaria and other forms of diseases, as pointed out in the MDGs and Brussels Program of Action.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

- As a global forum, the World Intellectual Property organization (WIPO) has organized high level forums where key policy makers from least developed countries such as ministers, parliamentarians, intellectual property professionals and senior government officials interacted with their counterparts from developing and developed countries as well as leaders of intergovernmental organizations and civil society. This kind of dialogue helped LDCs policy makers and other officials to articulate their needs, to consider and put forward proposals to build intellectual property institutions and systems to use innovation and creativity for economic growth and development for the alleviation of poverty
- WIPO has undertaken numerous works to equip the IP offices of LDCs with information and communication technologies. This is of great importance in the light of ongoing efforts both to strengthen innovation and creativity in the electronic environment and to use the power of digital technology to make the flows of technology cheaper and more efficient and user friendly. At the practical level, in addition to providing Internet connectivity, WIPO has contributed to the automation of 34 intellectual property offices in the African and Asian LDCs and training was provided to over 100 technical experts.
- Innovation and creativity plays an important role in the agricultural sector. Central to this work is the analysis and dissemination of information on the use of innovation and creativity as a public policy tool to address food security. To this effect, WIPO has convened and will continue to convene a series of public policy symposia focused on current cross-cutting issues such as biotechnology, public sector IP management, patent landscaping and life sciences regulation. WIPO will also continue to cooperate closely with the FAO in this context.
- WIPO's work in the field of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources also contributes to the MDGs. Appropriate protection of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources can contribute to ensuring that local communities who conserve and maintain these resources

receive a fair share of economic benefits derived from their exploitation. Communities can also be empowered to trade in culturally-distinct goods and services they derive from their knowledge systems and traditional creativity. In this context, WIPO identify record and value the economic importance of traditional cultural expressions in LDCs. WIPO also digitize TCEs to make easily accessible.

- Copyright and related rights play a role in the realization of the MDGs and its target of making primary education accessible to children everywhere. In particular, legislative advice in the use of flexibilities in the IP system to access the Internet and also obtain published materials can make a huge difference in the attainment of policy objectives in the area of education and access to knowledge.
- WIPO has made significant strides over recent years which has resulted in making available and easily searchable the technological information contained in over 1.6 million published international patent applications as well as in a number of national and regional patent collections. The digitization of national and regional patent collections and making them available for search by the general public and educational and research institutions in the LDCs will continue to be a priority work for WIPO.
- Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) provide the local research and business community in LDCs with expert assistance in the effective retrieval of technological information. Resources such as online access to patent, scientific and technical journal databases are supported by staff capable of assisting local users in identifying and searching often vast and complex databases, some of which contain tens of millions of documents. TISCs can be located, amongst other appropriate institutions, in universities, research centers and business associations, such as chambers of commerce.
- TISCs also actively promote the use of two WIPO programs designed to facilitate access to knowledge for LDCs: the “Access to Research for Development and Innovation” (aRDi) program provides access to scientific and technical journals, while the “Access to Specialized Patent Information” (ASPI) provides access to more sophisticated search and analysis tools available in commercial patent databases. Both programs are public-private

partnerships with scientific and technical publishers and with commercial patent database providers.

- Of major significance, LDCs are given access to the scholarly and technical literature in both programs free of charge including the establishment of the National Technological Centers in LDCs and the training of technical experts. The programs thereby seek to reinforce the capacity of the LDCs, to participate in the global knowledge economy, and support their researchers in creating and developing new solutions to technical challenges faced on a local and global level.
- In preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs, WIPO organized regional forums for English, French and Portuguese speaking LDCs. The forums were attended by ministers, parliamentarians, business and industry entrepreneurs, heads of research organizations and academics. The participants in the forums emphasized that any cooperation in the area of IP should contain a new vision and direction to address the need for LDCs to use innovation and creativity for development and to improve the living conditions of the people in those countries.
- On February 14 and 15 (last month) WIPO organized a pre conference Forum for LDCs IV. The Forum that was opened by the Director General of WIPO was chaired by the Global Coordinator of LDCs and attended by Ministers, Ambassadors and permanent representatives, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a message from Mr. Chick Sidi Diarra, United Nations High Representative for LDCs and Secretary-General of the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs.
- The forum provided an excellent opportunity to summarize the conclusions of the regional forums held in Kampala, Cotonou, Dhaka and Maputo.
- Participants highlighted the special concerns and challenges faced by LDCs in promoting innovation and creativity in the informal sector and urged WIPO and other organizations to put mechanisms in place to address this situation as well as to see how best to bring the benefits to the stakeholders in this sector.

- The ministers and participants strongly recommended that the WIPO deliverables in the six areas namely:
 - Intellectual property and innovation policies and strategies
 - Enhanced human technical skills
 - Improved access to knowledge and strengthened knowledge infrastructure
 - Establishment of technology and innovation support centers (TISCs)
 - Strategic use of branding
 - Documentation and digitization of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions

be transmitted to Istanbul for approval by Ministers and to be implemented in LDCs in the years ahead.

- Ministers, ambassadors, permanent representatives and senior officials requested that the document on WIPO deliverables be transmitted to the WIPO meeting to be organized on the occasion of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul, Turkey.

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