



## **Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva**

### **Statement by Salman Khalid Chaudhary, Second Secretary, under Agenda Item 17: Preliminary Draft of the Terms of Reference of the 2021 Evaluation of WIPO External Offices during Thirty-Fourth Session Program and Budget Committee**

**29 June 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Pakistan attaches great importance to the external evaluation of the entire network of WIPO External Offices (EOs). Over the years, the issue of opening new EOs has been politicized primarily due to mismatch between the number of EOs that could be opened in a given biennium and the number of applicant countries. Although Pakistan is not an applicant for hosting an EO, Pakistan delegation has actively participated in discussions concerning EOs at the Program & Budget Committee (PBC) as well as at the General Assembly (GA).

Pakistan's consistent position on the issue is guided by the principles of neutrality, objectivity, inclusiveness, transparency as well as the "Guiding Principles Regarding WIPO External Offices" agreed by the General Assembly in 2015 and the recommendation contained in the External Auditor's Report submitted during the 31st session of the PBC. These Guiding Principles and recommendations of the External Auditor offer important insights for the development of the TORs and the subsequent evaluation.

My delegation thanks the Secretariat for preparing the Preliminary Draft of the Terms of Reference. It is heartening to see some tangible progress on this issue finally. I also thank the DDG Hasan Kleib for the presentation just now.

I also thank the Secretariat for taking into account my delegation's written submissions in the preparation of the preliminary draft. We believe that the draft contains the essential elements for the evaluation and it's a good basis to start our discussions on this important issue.

We have some suggestions on various sections of the report.

We propose that the evaluation should cover the period starting from the adoption of the Guiding Principles in 2015. This suggestion is in line with Guiding Principle 9. Also, this would be first evaluation to be conducted – its only logical not miss any biennium. Ideally the evaluation should cover the entire operations of an External Office. We can go along with the scope of evaluation which covers the period following the adoption of Guiding Principles.

On objectives; according to the Guiding Principles concerning the External Offices, in addition to assessing the performance of the network, the size of network is also to be evaluated. Guiding principles 12 states and I quote, “The ability to maintain the financial and budgetary sustainability of the WIPO External Offices network will depend on whether it contributes to the delivery of program results, the cost-effectiveness of its operation and the prevailing financial situation of the Organization, and the Secretariat should keep Member States adequately appraised of this consideration”. Therefore, its very important to base the evaluation on some of these questions:

- 1 – Assess whether External Offices are essential to the appropriate functioning of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and fulfillment of its core objectives.
- 2 – Carry out empirical and objective assessment of cost-effectiveness of maintaining the External Offices as compared to achieving similar objectives by other means.

We understand that the whole document is in brackets. We will not propose deletions at this stage. My delegation would like to state that the purpose of evaluation is not only to assist External Offices to improve their operations and service delivery and identify best practices or for that matter to improve their effectiveness or efficiency – These could be only be a secondary objective only after if we really found a rationale to maintain the External Offices network.

On methodology, we agree with bullet 4 that evaluation should take into account different profiles, mandates, contexts and circumstances of existing External Offices. This would be particularly true for two EOs established in recent years.

On management arrangements, our preference is an independent and neutral organization outside WIPO to ensure the neutrality and objectivity of the evaluation. In that context we don't agree with para 17 as well 18. In terms of the budget, there should be sufficient separate budget allocated to this exercise.

Finally, Mr. Chair, as I said earlier that the preliminary draft contains essential elements and offers different options in line with the views expressed by Member States – this draft is the result of views expressed by a number of delegations verbally and in written format as well as the GPs and the external audit report, therefore, our discussions should be based on this document.

I thank you.