

Statement of the Union for the Public Domain at the WIPO Development Agenda Meeting, June 21, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to take the floor during this important meeting on the future of WIPO's work. I am speaking on behalf of the Union for the Public Domain. This is a non-profit citizens group.

Our mission is to protect and enhance the public domain in matters concerning intellectual property. We are a membership organization, acting as an independent voice on intellectual property issues.

We welcome the thoughtful and important proposal of the group of Friends of Development. We also highly welcome the initiative by India and Pakistan intended to bring structure to the debate. This will accelerate the finding of results, and in this way free resources that can subsequently be used to investigate possibilities for WIPO to foster worldwide intellectual wealth.

We also highly appreciate the important and thoughtful statement, the Doha Plan of Action the 130 countries made at the second South Summit in Doha.

We believe that WIPO's role cannot be limited to technical assistance alone. Rather, the development dimension should be incorporated into WIPO's work in a coherent and permanent way. An independent evaluation and research office (WERO) created by WIPO is the best way to assure that all countries benefit to the largest possible extent from the system of patents, copyrights and trademarks.

The Union for the Public Domain greatly appreciates the idea of a treaty on Access to Knowledge. This treaty should include:

- a balance of the interests of rights holders and the public at large
- and an adequate consideration of the needs of developing countries

The treaty on Access to Knowledge should also pay due respect to the importance a strong public domain has for fostering creativity within every society.

The Union for the Public Domain *supports* a sensible international system of patents, copyright and trademarks. Patents, copyright and trademarks should work as tools for the greater social good in developing as well as developed countries. They are indeed powerful tools; but they are only tools, and can never be ends in themselves. We will be happy to offer advice on how to best use them for the greater good of humanity.

The objective of WIPO's work can only be to foster the growth and the creation of a critical mass of knowledge in all countries, especially developing countries. A public domain that is strong and protected against monopolisation is a prerequisite to this. Helping to build a strong base of knowledge from which creativity can depart, WIPO can truly become an institution fostering and promoting intellectual wealth.