

**WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION**

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**COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Communication from the World Intellectual Property Organisation**

In a letter dated 23 February addressed to the Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) has requested that WIPO be granted observer status in the CTE.

The letter from the Director-General of WIPO sets out the following:

" Under the draft WIPO Programme and Budget for the 1998-99 biennium, a set of new initiatives is proposed to promote better use of, and where needed, evolution of the intellectual property system to take into account developments in other fora. One such initiative involves examination of the role of intellectual property in the preservation, conservation and dissemination of global biological diversity and biotechnology, and calls for WIPO's participation in fora where these issues are discussed, such as the CTE. A new Division within WIPO, the Global Intellectual Property Issues Division, has been created to carry out these initiatives.

The cooperation between the WTO and WIPO is well established, including a formal cooperation agreement to promote and facilitate implementation of the Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The grant of observer status in the CTE would further this cooperation in the interest of advancing the international trade and intellectual property systems."

The original letter from the Director-General of WIPO can be consulted in office 3025, Centre William Rappard.