

Critical issues on IP policy to meet the millennium challenges

Senior representatives from countries of Asia and the Pacific gathered in New Delhi, India from July 7 to 9, 1999 to discuss intellectual property development in developing countries and strategies for framing policies to meet the challenges of the next millennium.

During the opening ceremony, Mr. Shri Sikander Bakht, India's Minister of Industry expressed confidence that together with WIPO's assistance they will move to "spur human activity and push forward the boundaries of science and technology by providing a stable environment for the marketing of intellectual property products in a manner which is both equitable, balanced, and mutually advantageous."

In the first of two keynote speeches, Mr. Roberto Castelo, Deputy Director General of WIPO elabo-

rated on the initiatives already taken by WIPO to address IP protection as a global issue and stressed the need to develop human resources to effectively modernize established systems.

In a second keynote speech, Dr. S. Narayan, Secretary, Department of Industrial Development provided a developing country perspective on critical areas of IP in the next century and shared his vision that the next millennium would be characterized by the inventiveness of the individual.

The Regional Forum was organized with the cooperation of the Government of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and attended by some 150 officials from 19 countries of Asia and the Pacific.

The formal session of the Forum divided issues for consideration into themes presented by international experts in these fields:

- critical areas for intellectual property in the 21st Century

Update on India and the PCT

In the six months since its accession to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), India has been designated in some 12,971 international applications filed under the PCT. In the month of May alone some 2,892 applications, more than 50 percent of all applications, included India as a designated country in their international applications.

Furthermore there have already been 27 PCT applications from India and seeking protection in fellow PCT states.

Commenting on these figures, the Deputy Director of WIPO, Mr. Robert Castelo said that this was indicative of increasing importance attached to the Indian economy by international inventors.



Mr. Sikander Bakht, Minister of Industry (left) expresses confidence that with WIPO assistance they will move to "spur human activity and push forward the boundaries of science and technology." Shown here at the opening ceremony with Mr. Roberto Castelo, Deputy Director General, WIPO.

- implementation of the TRIPS Agreement and the post TRIPS era
- WIPONET in the development and transfer of technology and its contribution to the modernization of IP services
- protection and management of IP in a digital environment
- policy considerations for establishing effective systems for the enforcement of IPRs
- the evolution of a legal framework for IP and selected global issues – indigenous knowledge, folklore, environment, biodiversity, biotechnology, etc.
- IP as a tool for development in the knowledge based economy

At the conclusion of the Forum, a statement was adopted by the participants that underlined the need to strengthen cooperation among countries in the region and for them to develop a common platform to voice concerns in various IP fora. The statement also recognised the valuable role played by WIPO in providing the necessary assistance to implement priorities identified in the Forum.