

**WIPO Director General Daren Tang Keynote at IP Week: Global Forum on
Intellectual Property**
Singapore, August 26, 2025

[Check Against Delivery]

Your Excellency Dr. Tan See Leng, Minister for Manpower and Minister-in-charge of Energy and Science & Technology of Singapore,

Your Excellency Mr Murali Pillai, Senior Minister of State for Law of Singapore,

Your Excellency Mr Norbert Mao, Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Uganda,

Your Excellency, Mr. Siromi Turaga, Acting Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of Fiji,

Dear heads of IP institutions,

Dear fellow members of the global IP community,

Dear friends, dear colleagues,

It is an honor to be back at the GFIP and in my home country of Singapore.

Let me start by congratulating the award winners, and more broadly Singapore for the progress of its SIPS 2030, a development which brings me great joy and pride as someone who was involved in its inception.

This year's theme for the GFIP is about innovating in a time of change, a theme that seems especially pertinent at this time of political upheaval, economic uncertainty, cultural change and technological acceleration.

As the global agency for IP consisting of 194 Members, WIPO has a unique vantage point that covers the whole world. I would therefore like to start by sharing some of the long term, global trends impacting on IP, innovation and creativity.

First, the geography of innovation and creativity continues to transform, with the most dynamic engines of growth increasingly located in the Asia-Pacific region. Within a six-hour flight radius of Singapore – an area that covers North-East, South-East and South Asia, there is more IP being filed than in the rest of the world, covering 70% of all IPs filed in 2023.

But beyond IP filings, the region is also cementing its position as a place where strong innovation ecosystems are being built. Singapore, the Republic of Korea, China and Japan are all ranked among the top 20 in WIPO's Global Innovation Index. Others like Malaysia, Viet Nam, Thailand and the Philippines are also doing well, with higher ratings than many of their peers in the same income group. And countries like India and

Indonesia have made spectacular jumps in rankings, climbing more than 30 places in the last ten years.

Second, around the world, IP activity has grown. Global IP filings have climbed steadily, reaching 23 million in 2023 – or around 45 each minute. Last month, WIPO released a report showing that investments in intangible assets grew almost four times as fast as tangible assets, reaching \$7.6 trillion last year. Trade in IP crossed the trillion dollar mark in 2023. All of this is driving a shift in value creation and storage from tangible to intangible assets or IAs, whose global value is now estimated to be about \$80 trillion.

Anybody seeking to understand the economy of today and of the future cannot do so without taking into account the value and impact of IP and other intangible assets.

Third, the nature of innovation and creativity is itself changing, driven by the growth of digital technologies. These technologies – AI, quantum computing, 5G/6G, IoT and others – already make up one third of all patents filed today. These technologies are transforming industrial machines and mechanical devices. Our phones are an obvious example – but even the car is becoming less and less an industrial engine and more and more software, algorithms, data and content on 4 wheels.

This is also driving entirely new areas of economic activity. Let us take the videogames industry as an example. Gaming is a combination of culture, creative expression, digital entertainment and high performance gaming equipment and consoles. It is creating new and massive economic opportunities with global revenues of over \$200 billion and growing. Audiences for esports have already reached 600 million – not high enough to match the 5 billion that watch the Olympics or the World Cup, but growing at an incredible 20% compounded growth rate.

Fourth, the creative economy is emerging as a key area of interest to policymakers around the world, especially those from developing and emerging countries. The rising popularity of K-pop, Afrobeats and Latin artistes alongside Western pop, the emergence of Bollywood and Nollywood alongside Hollywood, award winning games like Bahamut from Saudi Arabia and Black Myth Wukong from China show that creators are emerging from different parts of the world, harnessing the power of modern digital technologies to bring their culture to the world in new ways.

All in all, the global landscape of innovation and creativity is dramatically transforming with a much more diverse set of innovators and creators joining established regions in shaping the modern world with their ideas, inventions and imagination.

Against the backdrop of these dramatic changes in the global innovation and creative landscape, our way of looking at IP simply cannot be “business as usual” but must also transform.

IP can no longer just be about law and legal rights of interest only to experts and specialists, but be seen and be used by entrepreneurs, business owners, start-up founders, creators, designers, researchers and others as a business and financial asset to help bring their ideas to the market,

IP must not just be for sophisticated actors with deep pockets, but also for those innovating and creating at the grassroots levels, better serving the underserved like women, youth, MSMEs and even rural communities, many of whom have the desire and ambition to innovate or create, but lack the tools and confidence to do so,

And IP must become a catalyst for jobs, entrepreneurship, investments, growth, prosperity and development for all countries, developed, emerging and developing.

In the past 5 years, WIPO has been working hard with our Member States and other stakeholders to bring this new vision of IP alive through concrete plans and actions, focusing on impact on the ground. We are pleased to share some of the results we have been able to achieve with the support of our Member States and other stakeholders.

First, in these 5 years, the WIPO Academy has trained 620,000 people from around the world, becoming the world's largest provider of training, knowledge and skills in IP by going beyond training IP professionals and experts to also providing practical IP skills to business owners, teachers, youth, and others.

Second, last year WIPO Member States made history by agreeing to two new multilateral treaties – the WIPO Treaty on IP, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, and the Riyadh Design Law Treaty. This was achieved by consensus, showing that WIPO is a place where multilateralism can still succeed, despite the geopolitical tensions and challenges that are affecting all UN agencies and international bodies.

Third, we are rallying the global IP community to not just address today's IP issues, but also the IP issues of the future. This is why beyond treaty negotiations, WIPO is also hosting a wide range of discussions on emerging issues like IP Finance and Standard Essential Patents, as well as a series of Conversations on the impact of Gen-AI on the IP ecosystem, which has seen more than 14,000 people from 172 countries participating, allowing for all countries to share ideas, exchange best practices and build trust even if there is little appetite for Member States to forge international norms around this topic at the present moment.

Fourth, WIPO's Global IP services continue to support enterprises of all sizes to secure cross-border IP registration and protection for hundreds of thousands of IP each year through the PCT, Madrid and Hague systems and resolve IP disputes through our WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center.

Many of the audience who are IP practitioners will be pleased to know that I have emphasized to my WIPO colleagues that we need to be even better in our serving our "clients", and step up our efforts to get feedback from our users. One recent example of this new approach is the recent launch of the new eMadrid system, which started not with IT engineers, but with consultations from almost one thousand users from around the world to help us redesign the system from a customer centered point of view.

Fifth, we are helping to transform what IP means for our Member States, ensuring that it is seen as key for growth and development, whatever their stage of development.

While we are currently helping over 65 countries with their National IP strategies and many others with legislative assistance and advice, where the work has changed the most dramatically is that we are trying to bring IP into the lives of people on the ground.

We have directly assisted thousands of businesses in over 60 countries with our IP Management Clinics and are supporting thousands of researchers through our network of 1,700 Technology and Innovation Support Centers in over 80 countries. Our programs, projects and initiatives have brought IP into the lives of 400,000 women, 300,000 youth and 200,000 business owners, helping them to use IP as part of their life or business journey.

What all of these have done is to give a much bigger group of people around the world a sense that IP is part of their lives too – that even if they are in a developing or emerging country, their ideas, their ingenuity and their creativity can be supported. And in the lives we have touched we have demonstrated that innovators and creators exist everywhere and is truly part of who we are as human beings.

But to scale up our support so that we reach out not just to hundreds of thousands but to millions we will need even more partners and collaborators. This is why I am making an appeal to all of you to join WIPO in this movement to reshape the global IP ecosystem, mainstream IP and to bring IP to everyone, everywhere.

In conclusion, in the Asia Pacific region, prosperity, growth and development in the past 80 years have been based on agriculture and commodities, drawing value from the resources of the land and sea. But with the dramatic transformations of our economies and peoples, the future of growth and development in this region and the world will be based on the intellectual resources of our people.

No matter how rich the resources of the land and the seas, they are finite and will run out one day. But the human spirit of imagination, invention, creativity and innovation will never run out. Let us therefore work together to nurture this spirit, keep the human creator and innovator at the heart of the IP system, and make IP a catalyst for the future growth of humankind.

I thank you and wish all of you a fruitful and successful GFIP.