

General Statement

Iceland would like to sincerely thank the WIPO team for preparing and organising this General Assemblies meeting in Geneva and congratulates Mr. Gurry on his continuing solid leadership and steady achievements within the Organization.

Iceland would also like to thank the Organization for continued strong and fruitful cooperation and support in various aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. It is of high importance to have access, not only to wide variety of information, technical resources and guidelines but also to be able to interact with the Office's experts as needed.

Filing numbers 2017-2018 have been similar the last few years and interest in the international filing systems, namely the PCT, Madrid and The Hague systems is continuous in Iceland. The rise in national patent applications this year is worth noticing and so far, the IPO has received around 80% more applications than in September last year. Increased awareness and the new search services of the IPO in co-operation with the Nordic Patent Institute seem to play a role in the increase in filings.

During the year 2018 the Icelandic Patent Office (IPO) has been simplifying all procedures within the office, introducing a new and more simple office Organizational Chart and simpler processes. Streamlining of services for users continues to be the focus point and the office is currently reviewing both databases and/or electronic filing systems for Patents, Designs and Trademarks, which should be up and running by the end of this year. Iceland also continues to follow and implement the important WIPO tools in this respect and on 25 August 2017 Iceland joined the Global Brands Database, which has proven to be an excellent tool for both users and the Office.

To underline the importance of the Madrid Protocol for Icelandic users, a Madrid seminar, led by Ms Ásta Valdimarsdóttir, was hosted in Iceland in February 2018. The event was very well received with participants from various business. The topics focused both on the users of the system and newcomers, such as new innovative businesses. On the morning preceding the event, Ms. Valdimarsdóttir gave a presentation at a conference held by *Íslandsstofa – Promote Iceland* on the protection of trademarks in foreign markets. In line with the aims of the National IPR strategy 2016-2022, the IPO has been focusing more and more on enhancing national co-operation, both with governmental offices and Universities to stimulate discussion on IPR and increase awareness. Another event this year, conference in relation to the Geothermal Industry, in which the office participated, led to extensive media coverage and discussion on the status of protection of innovation in the industry.

Iceland highly appreciated the focus on women in innovation for this years World IP Day and the IPO participated with a reflection from Ms. Borghildur Erlingsdottir, Director General of the IPO on the importance of encouraging women to engage in innovation and creativity. Also, Ms. Sandra Mjöll Jónsdóttir, CEO of Platome Biotechnology gave a video presentation on the importance of participation of women in innovation.

Iceland continues to actively participate in the SCT meetings and has since March 2017 raised concerns as to the seemingly insufficient protection against the registration of Country Names as Trademarks. Iceland is one of the countries behind the *Proposal Concerning the Protection of Country Names of National Significance*, cf. SCT/39/8 Rev. 2, which was briefly discussed at the 39th meeting of the SCT. The document received wide support within the Committee and the aim is to discuss the document and future steps further in the upcoming meeting of the committee in November. Iceland firmly

believes that the use of Country Names should be the fundamental right of every country, enjoying at least similar protection as State Emblems and Flags under Article 6ter of the Paris Convention.

In June 2018 changes were made to national law in Iceland relating to Patents, resulting in changes of the Patent Act, the Patent Regulation and the Regulation on Fees. The changes were mainly related to the implementation of EU Regulation No. 469/2009 on Supplementary Protection Certificates and No. 1901/2006 on paediatric medicines. Simultaneously a few provisions were updated or clarified.

The EU Directive No. 2015/2436 on Trademarks has not yet been implemented into the EEA Agreement, however, the Ministry of Industries and Innovation in co-operation with the IPO, is working on analysis of necessary changes to the Trademark Act and Regulation in relation thereto. No changes are foreseen in other areas; however, the implementation of the EU Trade Secrets Directive No. 2016/943 is currently being investigated.

Iceland will continue to focus its awareness raising on innovative companies and start-ups and aim at closer cooperation with the Icelandic Universities, innovation centres and others in that respect. Iceland would also very much welcome a close cooperation with the experts of the Organisation in such awareness raising projects in the future.

Finally, Iceland would like to reiterate its support to the adoption of the Design Law Treaty and believes that the text is mature enough for convening a Diplomatic Conference in the year 2019.