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STRENGTHENING THE IP ECOSYSTEM THROUGH RAISING PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS AND OTHER INITIATIVES

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ABSTRACT

The contribution outlines the key initiatives undertaken by the Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Armenia (AIPO) to strengthen the intellectual property (IP) ecosystem in the country. It highlights efforts to raise public awareness of IP, build professional capacity among enforcement and educational institutions and foster international cooperation with organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) and others. The document details major programs, including training courses, workshops, IP Moot Court competitions and sector-specific projects. It also provides information on the establishment of the National Intellectual Property Training Center, as well as progress on geographical indications and branding initiatives, which aim to protect traditional Armenian products and enhance their competitiveness. Together, these activities demonstrate the strategic approach taken by Armenia in promoting innovation, creativity and sustainable economic growth through a robust IP system.

* The views expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Secretariat or of the Member States of WIPO.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. AIPO has continued to strengthen its international cooperation, to raise public awareness about the importance of IP and to build professional capacity for effective IP administration and enforcement. Through close collaboration with key partners, including WIPO, EAPO and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), Armenia is working to align its practices with international standards, promote respect for creativity and innovation and ensure that its IP system supports sustainable economic and cultural development. This work primarily involves fostering international partnerships and promoting IP through culture, awareness and capacity-building for IP professionals.

II. IP AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES

2. The most serious and prevalent cases of IP rights infringements typically occur in countries where stakeholders and the general public have a minimal understanding of IP rights. A lack of sufficient awareness makes any anti-piracy or enforcement initiative a significant challenge. Armenia is among the countries where IP rights awareness remains low, not only among enforcement bodies, but also among rights holders and the general public.

3. In response, AIPO has implemented a wide range of activities and programs aimed at disseminating information and increasing IP awareness across multiple target groups. Many of these initiatives have been carried out in cooperation with international and regional partners, including WIPO, EAPO and others.

4. AIPO also plays a crucial role in capacity-building among police and customs authorities by analyzing emerging issues and by clarifying and supporting the application of legislation. To ensure ongoing and effective cooperation, periodic discussions will be held on operational challenges and legislative implementation, and ongoing professional consultations will be provided to enforcement bodies. In this context, AIPO regularly organizes targeted training sessions, workshops, and inter-agency meetings focused on the identification of counterfeit goods, enforcement of trademark and geographical indication rights and recent legislative developments. Examples of these initiatives, including awareness-raising activities, are highlighted below.

A. IP4APPS BOOTCAMP

5. One of the key initiatives in strengthening IP awareness was the intensive three-day international training program “IP4Apps Bootcamp”. The event was jointly organized by WIPO, AIPO, and the Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE). The program was designed to enhance the skills of young programmers and students in both IP protection and mobile application development. Training was delivered by Professor Malcolm Bain from the University of Barcelona, an expert nominated by WIPO. Over the three days, participants took part in interactive discussions, team exercises, quiz-based learning and case studies, gaining practical knowledge in copyright, trademarks, patents, and industrial design protection. The program helped students to better understand the role of IP in innovative projects and its relevance in the digital and business environments of today. At the conclusion of the bootcamp, participants received certificates jointly issued by ASUE, WIPO and AIPO. They also earned the opportunity to take part in the IPApplication Project competition, involving the development of an educational mobile application on IP. The top three participants will be invited to Geneva to visit the WIPO headquarters, attend thematic meetings and learn first-hand about the work of the Organization.

B. EU4IP PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN IP PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT IN ARMENIA

6. Funded by the European Union and implemented by EUIPO, the EU4IP program aims to strengthen the protection and enforcement of IP rights in Armenia through targeted activities, institutional cooperation and legislative development.

7. During the two-year implementation period of the EU4IP program, a range of activities is envisaged to promote development of the field, including meetings, workshops and legislative reforms. Special attention is given to the protection of IP rights, and law enforcement bodies have been identified as the main beneficiaries whose active involvement constitutes an essential precondition for the effective implementation of the project. In this regard, a number of thematic workshops are planned to support institutional capacity-building and facilitate knowledge exchange with international experts. In particular, a workshop on enforcement has been planned to examine IP enforcement practices and address operational challenges faced by the competent authorities.

8. Within the framework of the program, a workshop on geographical indications and trademarks dedicated to improving the skills of registering and examining IP rights was held in Yerevan from May 13 to 15, 2026. It focused on the current state of legal regulation in Armenia and facilitated the exchange of effective European practices and their possible application.

C. TRAINING ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN IP FOR FUTURE TRAINERS AT THE IP TRAINING CENTER

9. This program was jointly organized by AIPO, the WIPO Academy and American University of Armenia (AUA) Extension. The establishment of the National IP Training Center began in the fall of 2023, following a memorandum of understanding between WIPO Academy and the IP Office.

10. The first training course was conducted in a distance-learning format by WIPO Academy instructors. Following a subsequent memorandum signed in 2024 with the AUA, the National IP Training Center officially became a part of AUA Extension. The second five-day training course entitled “Recent Developments in Intellectual Property and Advanced Teaching Methodologies” took place at the AUA. The course was designed for future instructors at the National IP Training Center and aimed to equip them with advanced knowledge in IP and modern teaching methodologies. Participants are certified as IP experts upon completion of the course, further strengthening the national capacities of Armenia to provide IP education and enable professional development.

D. IP MOOT COURT COMPETITIONS

11. Over the past six years, the IP Moot Court Competition has grown into one of the largest and most prestigious IP events in Armenia. Held annually, it brings together a diverse range of participants from both the private and public sectors, providing a dynamic platform for learning, networking and professional development. The IP Rights Center of Armenia hosts Annual IP Moot Court Competitions, with teams from Yerevan and other regions of Armenia. Law students from public and private universities compete to demonstrate their knowledge and their analytical and oral advocacy skills in modern IP law cases. The competition is judged by IP lawyers from private law firms, representatives of State authorities, and members of copyright societies. The IP Rights Center of Armenia ensures that the event serves as both an educational forum and a public awareness initiative, allowing students to refine their legal writing and argumentation skills while engaging with real-world IP issues. Over the past six years, the IP Moot Court has also become an ideal venue for law firms, State institutions and

other organizations to identify and recruit emerging talent in the field of IP rights, further strengthening the Armenian IP ecosystem.

E. REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PATENT EXPERTISE IN YEREVAN

12. A regional workshop entitled “General Expert Space: Actual Questions of Patent Expertise” jointly organized by EAPO and AIPO, with support from WIPO, was held in Yerevan. The workshop brought together experts and stakeholders from various fields to discuss pressing issues in patent examination and IP rights. The agenda included topics such as the examination of computer-assisted inventions, patents incorporating artificial intelligence, licensing of pharmaceutical inventions, protection of graphical interfaces and the evaluation of designs containing elements of protected trademarks and copyrighted works. To strengthen and formalize cooperation, a memorandum of understanding was signed during the workshop between AIPO and the Federal Service for IP of the Russian Federation, marking a significant step toward enhanced collaboration in patent expertise.

F. PUBLIC-PRIVATE ROUNDTABLE ON IP RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT

13. The Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) of the United States Department of Commerce, in collaboration with AIPO, organized a public-private roundtable in Yerevan focused on enhancing the protection and enforcement of IP rights. Representatives of the IP Office and other relevant bodies actively participated, contributing to discussions on practical strategies for strengthening IP rights enforcement and fostering collaboration between public and private stakeholders.

III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL IP TRAINING CENTER

14. Plans are under way to set up a national IP Training Center (IPTC) in 2026 involving close partnership between AIPO and AUA. The IP Training Center will operate as part of the AUA Extension through the University IP Training Program. This work builds on the partnership that began in 2023, when WIPO Academy and AIPO agreed to set up a national institution focused on improving IP education and awareness in the country.

15. This initiative aims to help Armenia to develop a stronger IP system that encourages innovation, creativity and national growth. The IP Training Center aims to establish itself as a leader in the field by offering practical courses and programs tailored to the needs of Armenia in science, technology and the creative industries and developing the skills of IP professionals. Topics such as counterfeiting and piracy are included in the course curriculum where relevant. In future courses, more attention will be given to these issues, in line with demand.

16. After the initial online Training of Trainers program organized by WIPO, AIPO began to work with AUA to move the project forward, taking advantage of the strong academic base and modern infrastructure of the University. The cooperation was made official in 2024 through a memorandum of understanding. In 2025, the Executive Training of Trainers Module entitled “On Recent Developments in IP and Advanced Teaching Methodologies” was completed onsite in Yerevan. Sixteen participants were certified to deliver future IP training sessions, thereby forming the core pool of IP trainers for the IP Training Center.

IV. CONCLUSION

17. Taken together, these initiatives form the foundations of a more innovative, knowledge-driven economy. By continuing to build awareness, invest in capacity-building and strengthen collaboration among public and private stakeholders, Armenia is positioning IP as a vital tool in fostering national development, economic growth and international recognition.

[End of contribution]