

Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs

Thirteenth Session
Geneva, October 21 to 23, 2024

PROPOSAL BY THE DELEGATION OF CHINA

Document prepared by the International Bureau

1. In a communication dated September 10, 2024, the International Bureau received a proposal from the Delegation of China concerning the possibility of introducing the Chinese language into the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs for consideration by the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs, at its thirteenth session to be held in Geneva from October 21 to 23, 2024.
2. The said proposal is annexed to this document.

[Annex follows]

PROPOSAL BY THE DELEGATION OF CHINA

Proposal on including Chinese as an official language of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs

China's proposal is to include Chinese as an official language of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs.

Chinese is used by the largest population in the world and is one of the six official languages of the United Nations system. Therefore, It is necessary for WIPO, who as a UN specialized agency, to include Chinese as a working language of the Hague System.

Since China's accession to the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement on May 5, 2022, China has accounted for an important origin of the Hague System application. In 2023, the applications submitted by the Chinese applicants through the Hague System were 1813, ranking first globally and accounting for 21% of the world's total. 3758 designs were included in these applications, which ranked second place in the world. Moreover, this good momentum has continued in 2024 and it is highly expected that China may rank the first both in terms of the number of applications and the designs included.

With the strengthened intellectual property protection and active design innovations, Chinese designers attach even greater importance on design protection. Over the past 5 years, the number of designs granted in China has stabilized at over 500,000 per year, reaching 638,000 in 2023. This consists of the prominent potential of the Hague System utilization in China.

One of the key mandates of WIPO is to provide optimal global IP services to its member states, businesses and society. Language issue, as a major concern of the Chinese applicants regarding international design filings, should be taken seriously by WIPO, so as to meet the request of the Chinese users and fulfilling its goal of providing customer-centric services. The inclusion of Chinese as a working language in the Hague System would incentivize greater enthusiasm among Chinese users and further unleash the potential of the System in China.

For the above reasons, China has proposed this issue repeatedly on many occasions, even as early as before joining the Hague System and during the negotiation process of the accession. In 2018, the Commissioner of the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) addressed a formal letter to the Director General of WIPO requesting to include Chinese as a working language in the Hague System. Relevant proposals were also made by the Chinese delegation at previous meetings of the Hague Working Group.

In view that China has officially joined the Hague System, including Chinese as one of the working languages of the Hague System will not only provide better services and protection for Chinese applicants but also enhance the influence of the Hague System and eventually benefit all WIPO member states. China expects the Working Group on the Legal Development of the Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs to recommend the Assembly of the Hague Union to consider the proposal.

[End of Annex and of document]