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WIPO targets abuse of trademarks on the Internet

In a report published on April 30, WIPO sets out a series of recommendations that are aimed at curbing the abuse of trademarks on the Internet. The WIPO report has been presented for consideration to the Interim Board of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the new non-profit international corporation formed to oversee a select number of the Internet's core technical management functions.

The report is the culmination of a process approved by WIPO member states last September. It addresses questions relating to domain names, intellectual property and related dispute-resolution issues. For the first time ever, the report sets out a definition for the abusive use of trademarks on the Internet.

With the explosive growth of the Internet and the increasing use of domain names as business identifiers, these issues have sparked great interest and worldwide debate. Among the problems identified in WIPO's report, and

directly addressed by its recommendations, are bad faith, abusive registrations of domain names, also known as "cybersquatting," as well as the countervailing practice, referred to by domain name holders as "reverse domain name hijacking." "Cybersquatting" occurs when individuals register a recognized trademark as a domain name and attempt to sell it to the genuine owner of that trademark for commercial profit. So-called "reverse domain name hijacking", which has appeared as a reaction to this, involves big businesses threatening to sue legitimate domain name registrants who do not give up the right to the registration.

WIPO issued an interim report in December 1998 based on a first series of international consultations. Experts at WIPO then engaged in a second series of regional consultations to receive comments on the draft recommendations. The final report reflects the concerns that were expressed in the course of this process. Some of WIPO's initial recommenda-

tions have been reversed, others have remained intact and a few have been modified.

"In the final report, WIPO has made changes to the draft recommendations contained in its interim report in a concerted effort to build consensus amongst the diverse Internet stakeholders, and to produce practical recommendations for an effective Internet domain name system," said WIPO Assistant Director General Francis Gurry. He added "WIPO has conducted a truly international process, aimed at openness and



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transparency, with the widest possible geographical and sectoral participation among those interested in the future of the Internet.”

WIPO's consultations were extensive. They were conducted via three “Requests for Comments” which were widely distributed, published on the website (at <http://wipo2.wipo.int>), and discussed in 17 regional consultations in 15 different countries. The process attracted over 1,300 partic-

ipants from 74 different countries, including many governments.

The recommendations were made with the assistance of a multi-disciplinary panel of 15 international experts, set up by WIPO to contribute their expertise and to reflect the concerns of the intellectual property, Internet and public interest communities.

The final Report addresses four areas: dispute prevention, a uni-

form system of dispute resolution, the protection of famous and well-known marks in generic top level domains (gTLDs), and the impact on intellectual property of adding new gTLDs. WIPO makes a number of recommendations aimed at meeting the concerns of the rapidly expanding Internet-user community, and at giving recognition to the diverse social, commercial and communication purposes for which the Internet is used.

Key Recommendations:

- A set of minimum "best practices" to be adopted by all gTLD registration authorities. In particular, WIPO has recommended that the contact details of applicants using existing gTLDs be collected, and that those details be freely and instantly available over the Internet. WIPO also invites interested country top level domains (ccTLDs) to implement these practices.
- A uniform and mandatory administrative dispute-resolution system, to address cases of bad faith, abusive registrations, also known as “cybersquatting.” Using this system, panels of three experts would apply the streamlined, quick and cost-effective procedures outlined in the report, to review multiple claims and eliminate cases of clear abuse of trademark holders' rights, leaving the more complex cases to the courts.
- A system by which owners of globally famous marks can obtain exclusions prohibiting others from registering the marks as domain names in gTLDs. The status of these marks would be determined by a panel of experts drawn from a list administered by WIPO.
- The WIPO report recommends further study and consultation on the feasibility of adding a differentiated non-commercial and use-restricted domain that could address the need for privacy and free speech on the Internet. In such a domain, users could agree that their contact details would remain private on condition that they refrain from commercial activity or from actions that might infringe the intellectual property rights of others. The suggestion needs more consultation before any recommendation can be made about it.
- Provided that the recommendations in the report are adopted and implemented, WIPO believes that the introduction of new gTLDs is possible. However, it does maintain that any new gTLDs should, in any event, be added to the domain name system in a slow and controlled manner to ensure that the impact of this experience is monitored and assessed.

WIPO's recommendations have been presented to ICANN for consideration at its Berlin meeting on May 25-27, 1999. WIPO will present this report to its 171 member states at their annual meeting in September.

Visits

Director General agrees upon plans for a study on the use of intellectual property by business during visit to Norway



Photo: Corbis / Richard T. Nowitz

Traditional Norwegian architecture, on show at the Folk Museum in Oslo

In collaboration with Norway's Patentstyret (Industrial Property and Patent Office), WIPO will undertake a study to examine the use of the intellectual property system by small and medium-size enterprises. This was a key outcome of Dr. Kamil Idris' visit to Oslo on May 19, 1999.

The plan to examine the impact of the intellectual property system on small and medium-size firms was discussed during a meeting between Dr. Idris and Mr. Lars Sponheim, Minister of Trade and Industry. Many of Norway's businesses fit into this category, which also employs a large workforce and generates a significant part of the country's gross domestic product.

Dr. Idris explained how the international registration systems administered by WIPO, such as the

Patent Cooperation Treaty and the Madrid and Hague systems, can help small and medium-size enterprises receive important technological information. The impact of the WIPO Global Information Technology Network (WIPO_{NET}) on small and medium-size firms was also reviewed as to how this will become an important source of patent information. WIPO_{NET} will provide these companies with strategic information on the availability of state-of-the-art technologies. The Director General also pointed out that WIPO treaties can support companies in protecting their technology.

Dr. Idris emphasized that the results of such a study would not only benefit Norwegian companies, but could also be adjusted to meet the needs of developing countries. WIPO officials will travel to Oslo in mid-June to meet with representatives of the government as well as the private sector to work out the details of this program.

The talks also covered the possibility of cooperation between WIPO and the government of Norway for establishing a training program for officials from developing countries. The program for officials involved in the registration and management side of industrial property offices would be implemented under the auspices of WIPO's Worldwide Academy. The WIPO Worldwide Academy will discuss the details of this program in mid-June in Oslo.

At a meeting with State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Mr. Leiv

Lunde, Dr. Idris discussed several issues relating to general reform of the United Nations system. The talks stressed the importance of increasing efficiency of the system to increase the relevance of the system as a whole. Talks also covered implementation of the TRIPS Agreement (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property) by developing countries. Developing countries must comply with the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement by January 2000. So far, 131 developing countries have benefited from WIPO's technical and legal assistance in this area.

Dr. Idris and Mr. Lunde also discussed the importance of intellectual property for the development of biotechnology and its relationship to biodiversity. They agreed on the importance of biotechnology and biodiversity as instruments for improving food security and health conditions, as well as preserving the environment.

The Director General also addressed a gathering of some 250 representatives of the Norwegian business community on the regional and international challenges of protecting innovations, trademarks and industrial designs in the 21st century. In an hour-long speech, he reviewed the importance of intellectual property in the digital and knowledge-based economies of the new millennium. Dr. Idris addressed issues dealing with collective leadership, relations between an inter-governmental organization and the private sector, and the need to devise a strategy to associate intellectual property with the needs of the people.

Director General emphasizes intellectual property as a human right during address to graduates at Franklin Pierce Law Center

The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr. Kamil Idris, told graduates at the Franklin Pierce Law Center in the United States of America that intellectual property is a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Franklin Pierce Law Center has been rated the top law school for the past three years in the teaching of intellectual property law in the United States. It is well known outside the country as well, as it receives many students from different parts of the world. WIPO has been cooperating with the FPLC for several years, sponsoring each year a number of students from developing countries for its post-graduate program.

At the May graduation ceremony, the university conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Laws degree on the Director General. In a citation, the President of the New-Hampshire-based university, Dr. Robert M. Viles, said Dr. Idris had served the international community "with extraordinary insight, understanding, compassion and skill." Dr. Viles said Dr. Idris had "encouraged, enlightened, and touched the lives of many, shedding light on the often obscure and arcane worlds of international affairs and intellectual property."

The President of the FPLC also paid tribute to Dr. Idris' foresight and leadership abilities. "You have demonstrated a remarkable ability to see issues from all sides

and chart a course forward," he said. Dr. Viles added that Dr. Idris had applied "considerable intellect and compassion to provide leadership and vision in a world of fast-changing economic, technological, social and political circumstances."

In his keynote address, Dr. Idris spoke on the theme of intellectual property and human rights. The Director General noted that during last year's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Geneva, the provisions of Article 27 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were reaffirmed. This Article provides for everyone to have the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he or she is the author. Dr. Idris noted that the right to intellectual property was inherent and could not arbitrarily be taken away. He observed that intellectual property rights must be balanced with others such as the right to freely participate in the cultural life of a given society.

At the event, attended by some 1,000 participants, the Director General also pointed out that intellectual property has become increasingly relevant in trade, health, culture, food security and in scientific, industrial and information technologies. He emphasized that intellectual property is a critical tool for the economic, social and cultural development of countries.



Dr. Idris, seen here with Dr. Robert M. Viles, FPLC President, after receiving an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the law school

During his visit, senior university officials thanked the Director General for the donation of WIPO publications to the law school's library. In response, Dr. Idris explained that the WIPO library had been integrated with the WIPO Worldwide Academy with a view to better serving the research needs of academics visiting WIPO's Geneva headquarters. Talks also focused on possible areas of cooperation between WIPO and the FPLC, particularly in relation to the training activities of the Academy.

Copyright

Moving closer to improved international copyright protection

The WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCRR) moved closer to agreement on several key issues at its second session. The Committee, which met from May 4 to 11, 1999, considered a wide range of issues relating to the protection of audiovisual rights of performers, databases, and the rights of broadcasting organizations.

Protection of Audiovisual Performances

The international protection of performers' rights were harmonized and updated by the December 1996 WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT). When adopting that Treaty, however, the Diplomatic Conference opted for the protection of the sound aspect of performances only. The Conference decided that the issue of protection of audiovisual aspects of performances, with a view to adopting a possible protocol to the WPPT, would be the subject of further discussion.

This session of the SCCRR took a major step forward towards agreement on the rights of broadcasting to the public, and contractual arrangements involving the transfer of rights from performers to producers of audiovisual works. Whilst there was no convergence on some issues, the discussions also generated a number of novel alternatives which, it was generally considered, moved the debate towards a final solution.

Protection of Databases

With regard to the question of protection of databases, the Committee assessed the current situation and national developments and noted that a study commissioned by the WIPO Secretariat on the economic impact of protection of databases was under way.

The issue of database protection is problematic. The availability and widespread use of new technologies make the copying of information contained in databases much easier, especially where databases are computerized. Today, in order to enjoy protection under copy-

right, databases must constitute intellectual creations by reason of the original choice or arrangement of the material. A large number of databases, however, cannot be considered original intellectual creations, such as telephone directories or meteorological databases, and are thus not protected, despite the considerable investment involved in their production.

Furthermore, many countries have significant concerns that protection of these kinds of databases might have negative effects on access to information by education, science, research and other related sectors.

The SCCRR

The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights was established in 1998 to examine matters of substantive law and of harmonization of standards in the field of copyright and related rights. The main and most important steps towards establishing minimum standards of copyright protection within the digital environment were taken in 1996 with the conclusion of the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT). The current work of the Standing Committee in the areas is designed to ensure both that existing international standards of protection are updated and enhanced, and that new standards are introduced as necessary. These issues will be the subject of further discussion at the third session of the Standing Committee from November 16 to 19, 1999.

Protection of Broadcasting Organizations

The question of protection of the rights of broadcasting organizations is not covered by the 1996 WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) and was the subject of spirited debate. The Committee reaffirmed the general willingness of its members to update the existing rights of these organizations and considered proposals on issues such as the scope and possible content of a new instrument.

WIPO confirms its commitment to work with NCAC in training copyright officials in the Asia-Pacific region

From April 5 to 9, WIPO received a high-level delegation from China headed by the Commissioner of the National Copyright Administration of China (NCAC), Mr. Yu Youxian, to discuss WIPO's cooperation with China in copyright matters. In particular it was agreed:

- that WIPO would co-organize with the NCAC two national and regional seminars on the collective administration of copyright towards the end of 1999. These would provide training and explore policy issues;
- to continue to include Chinese copyright officials in WIPO's training programs;
- in the year 2000, to organize in cooperation with the NCAC, seminars on the two so-called WIPO "Internet treaties"; i.e. the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT).

Cooperation for development

WIPO and Peking University examine the role of universities and research on the IP system in the 21st century

WIPO, together with Peking University and the Ministry of Education of the Government of the People's Republic of China, held a forum on how universities and research institutions can play an effective role in the intellectual property system in the next century. The symposium was held in Beijing from May 10 to 12 and was divided into six main sessions on:

- Perspectives of IP in the next millennium
- Policy and strategic considerations
- The teaching of intellectual property law
- Using modern information technologies
- IP as a global issue
- The valuation of intellectual property assets

The symposium attracted a great deal of attention primarily because of its subject matter and timeliness. Participants agreed on the indispensable role that universities and research institutions will continue to play in the intellectual property system and how this role will increase as the "information age" and "knowledge-based economy" continue to develop.

The symposium was attended by some fifty persons, mainly senior government officials engaged in intellectual property law and



Photo : Samar Shammoun

A view of the Forbidden City

administration, university professors, and researchers.

During the opening ceremony addresses were given by Professor Min Weifang, Vice President, Peking University, Mrs. Yuan Chengchen, Deputy Director General, Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, and Mr. Yang Zhengwu, Deputy Commissioner, State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO).

Participants agreed that the universities and research institutions in the region had more work to do both in promoting creativity as well as in pursuing commercialization of the inventions and innovations stemming from their establishments.

They also agreed that the teaching and research of intellectual property laws in universities in the developing countries of the region is crucial and requested that WIPO continue to provide assistance in this area.

The present and future plans for the WIPONET were favorably reviewed and participants asked that full access be extended to various institutions so they can participate actively in the network and, in particular, the WIPO Worldwide Academy distance learning programs.

At the request of participants, WIPO will also investigate the possibility of arranging a follow-up symposium on global intellectual property issues and the valuation of intellectual property assets.

Participants came from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam.

WIPO-WTO joint initiative continues to meet developing countries' needs for assistance

Some 32 countries have sent requests for assistance since WIPO and the WTO issued their July, 1998 joint initiative to provide technical cooperation for developing countries to help them meet the January 1, 2000 deadline for conforming with the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement).

The types of assistance provided are varied and include:

- modernization of intellectual property offices
- review of national legislation to ensure that a developing country's IP legislation complies with that required under the TRIPS Agreement
- development of human resources
- organization of national seminars on aspects of the TRIPS Agreement including enforcement and notification requirements

This year WIPO and WTO organized a joint sub-regional symposium on the implications of the TRIPS Agreement in Bangui for the French-speaking sub-Saharan countries from March 23 to 26.

In June, two WIPO-WTO jointly organized national seminars on IP and the implications of TRIPS are planned in Colombia and Venezuela, with a further meeting on the same topic scheduled in Cuba in November.

The TRIPS Agreement is a major WTO agreement. It came into being on January 1, 1995 at the same time as the WTO. The Agreement specifies minimum standards of protection for the main categories of intellectual property, building on the main WIPO conventions of Paris and Berne. It also deals with the effective enforcement of intellectual property rights. Developed countries had to comply with the Agreement by January 1, 1996. Developing countries have an extra four years until January 1, 2000. Least developed countries have a longer transition period until January 1, 2005.

WIPO promoting the Budapest Treaty in the CIS

From May 12 to 13, WIPO, together with the State Patent Office of Uzbekistan, held a regional seminar to promote the Budapest Treaty in the CIS. At present, only four CIS countries, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation,

Tajikistan and Ukraine are party to this Treaty, while three international depositaries, all in the Russian Federation, have acquired the status of international depositary authorities.

The Budapest Treaty

The main feature of the Treaty is that a contracting state which allows or requires the deposit of microorganisms for the purposes of patent procedure must recognize, for such purposes, the deposit of a microorganism with any "international depositary authority", irrespective of whether such authority is on or outside the territory of the said state.

Disclosure of the invention is a requirement for the grant of patents. Normally, an invention is disclosed by means of a written description. Where an invention involves a microorganism or the use of a microorganism, disclosure is not possible in writing but can only be effected by the deposit, with a specialized institution, of a sample of the microorganism. In practice, the term "microorganism" is interpreted in a broad sense, covering biological material which must be deposited for the purposes of disclosure, in particular regarding inventions relating to the food and pharmaceutical fields.

In order to eliminate the need to deposit in each country in which protection is sought, the Treaty provides that the deposit of a microorganism with any "international depositary authority" suffices for the purposes of patent procedure before the national patent offices of all of the contracting States and before any regional patent office (if such a regional office declares that it recognizes the effects of the Treaty). The European Patent Office (EPO) has made such a declaration.

WIPO seminar adopts practical approach to the commercialization and licensing of IP in Azerbaijan

A practical WIPO seminar on the commercialization and licensing of industrial property attracted some 80 participants in Baku, Azerbaijan from April 29 to 30. An international panel of moderators from Azerbaijan, France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom ensured that active, focused discussions followed each presentation.

Participants agreed that the commercialization of industrial property and in particular of potential inventions required specific technical expertise calling for a significant amount of work and professional knowledge. They noted with great interest the wealth of experience developed in the Russian

Federation in the valuing of intangible assets by commercial organizations. They agreed that Azerbaijan needs the infrastructure and appropriate legislation to allow the management of intangible intellectual property assets.

A considerable amount of discussion focused on licensing negotiation techniques and in particular the difficulty of maintaining a professional distance in licensing relations with an employee (when it is his or her work) that is being valued.

Participants agreed that local patent attorneys are the most suitable group of professionals to deal with for the valuation and licensing of industrial property.



Participants in the seminar appreciated the practical approach taken to the subject matter

WIPO symposium in the Caribbean puts the spotlight on the global information network and IP

Intellectual property specialists from throughout the Caribbean region, keen to learn more about navigating the global information network, met to discuss the latest technologies, the role of the Internet, and projections on how this area will develop in the 21st century, in Bridgetown, Barbados.

The symposium, organized in cooperation with the Government of Barbados from May 3 to 5, brought together seven international experts from the field of

intellectual property and information technology and 57 participants to discuss five main themes; electronic commerce, Internet domain names, the Internet, information technology plus computers and communication.

Electronic commerce

The symposium commenced with this topical issue and the difficulties posed by the absence of national boundaries and an effective regulatory infrastructure. In

addition, the international possibilities e-commerce will offer in the 21st century were explored.

The first day of the symposium closed with a first-hand account of the Canadian Innovation Center's experience with new systems of information technology.

Internet domain names
A full explanation of how the domain name system identifies a specific space on the Internet (such as <http://wipo.int>) was pro-

vided to participants. This was followed by an overview of the findings of the WIPO Internet Domain Name Process, which involved a series of international consultations carried out since August 1998 to establish recommendations for an effective system for registering domain names. Participants were among the first to be given "The Report of the WIPO Internet Domain Name Process" that had just been published on the WIPO Internet site: (<http://wipo2.wipo.int>).

The Internet
Inevitably, this theme was touched upon throughout the discussions; particular attention was paid to the long-term implications of the Internet for the region. Participants considered political, technical, and market studies on the Internet's regional impact.

Information technology (IT)
This theme focused on the IT development objectives for the Caribbean, including increasing IT expertise and the production of IT products and services.

Computers and communication
Participants considered the convergence of computers, communication, and the media, and how this convergence has laid the foundations for the global information society.

The symposium closed with a lively roundtable discussion during which the international experts dealt with a volley of questions from eager participants.

Unanimous support for recommendations on the protection of folklore

Vigorous, intensive discussions on the protection of expressions of folklore during consultations organized by WIPO and UNESCO resulted in the unanimous adoption of two sets of recommendations addressed to governments of the region and the organizers. The consultations took place in Hanoi, Vietnam from April 21 to 23 and brought together representatives from 15 countries of the Asia-Pacific Region, six international experts and four national collecting societies.



The region has a rich cultural heritage that encompasses literature, arts and crafts, music, visual arts, ceremonies and architecture associated with particular sites, as well as forms of traditional knowledge related to medicine, healing, agriculture, conservation and the sustainable use of biological diversity.

At the close of their discussions, the meeting formulated a set of recommendations to governments in the Asia-Pacific region that included that:

- The nations of the Asia-Pacific region need to devote greater attention and resources to the issues of legal protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.
- Wide-ranging discussions should be initiated with various experts on traditional knowledge and folklore, associations responsible for creating resources of traditional knowledge and folklore, academics, social activists and other interested groups to identify essential aspects of an action plan, aiming, ultimately, at the formulation of a legal mechanism for the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore at national and international levels.
- Nations of the region should cooperate to find solutions to problems of common concern and also to develop strategies, at the regional level, for exercise and management of rights in traditional knowledge and

A separate set of recommendations regarding future assistance from WIPO/UNESCO requested that these organizations :

1. Extend cooperation and support for national initiatives for awareness-building, including through discussion, debates, seminars.
2. Institute studies and projects for in-depth study of the issues relating to protection of folklore and traditional knowledge.
3. Initiate steps for development of a *sui generis* form of binding legal protection at national and international levels for the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore; taking into account the technological, legal, social, cultural and commercial developments which have taken place since the WIPO Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions were concluded in 1982.
4. Establish a Standing Committee on Traditional Knowledge and Folklore within both WIPO and UNESCO to facilitate the process of establishing legal protection of folklore and traditional knowledge. The Standing Committee will, inter alia, implement Recommendation 3 above, and facilitate and fund intra- and inter-regional consultation on the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.
5. Increase WIPO-UNESCO cooperation in providing assistance to developing countries in the form of :
 - legal and technical assistance,
 - specialized training in identification, documentation and conservation of folklore and traditional knowledge,
 - provision of necessary equipment and other financial resources.

folklore, and to support communities which are responsible for the creation, maintenance, custodianship and development of such traditional knowledge and folklore.

Member states attending were:

Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Exhibitions

Coming home to invention—WIPO shows you where invention hides—all around the house



Dr. Idris at the opening of WIPO's new exhibit At Home with Invention

Sixty square meters at WIPO's Information Center has been transformed into an apartment as part of WIPO's aim of demystifying intellectual property. The exhibition also demonstrates how relatively simple ideas that have become household objects benefited from the protection provided by the system of international property protection. Creators of these works reaped financial gain as a result of the intellectual property system and as a result were, in most cases, encouraged to further innovate. The layout is similar to a traditional home – with a living area, a bedroom, a space for dining, a kitchen, and a work area. Most of the objects on display have at some point in time been the object of a patent, trademark or industrial design application and protection. Copyright is also on show with novels and magazines lining the bookshelves of this typical home and music from CDs resonating in the background.

While many are often impressed with inventions such as the cellular telephone, the supersonic airplane, or the computer, most people tend to take for granted inventions such as the little ring you pull back to open a can or the paperclip or even the comb. These and many of the other inventions on show also fit under the category of intellectual property and deserve protection.

“There are those who think that intellectual property is something reserved for lawyers and experts, that it is not accessible to the public at large” said Dr. Idris. This could not be further from the truth. Intellectual property is very much a part of our daily lives and the exhibition ‘At Home with Invention’ demonstrates this point. We are very much at home with intellectual property”.

WIPO participates in the 27th Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions

To complement the inventive and international themes of the Geneva International Exhibition of Invention, and introduce a new perspective to this event, WIPO presented "Women Invent" an exhibition portraying some 200 inventions by women from around the world at this year's exhibition, which took place from April 30 to May 9.

"Women Invent" included illustrated panels tracking women's contributions to invention from the pioneer days of Marie Curie and her work in the fields of

chemistry and physics, to the air harmonica, a musical instrument constructed from empty soft drink containers by Michiko Araki, a 12-year-old Japanese schoolgirl.

For the past twenty years, WIPO has taken part in this international event that this year brought together some 1,000 inventions from 44 countries. WIPO Gold Medals have been awarded at the Exhibition since 1979, when the Gold Medal Scheme was introduced to stimulate and reward creativity throughout the world.



Presenting WIPO, and the work of women inventors, to the public



Sri Lanka wins Gold Medal for the best young inventor.

Mr. L. R. K. Sanaratne, a young engineer, won his WIPO Gold Medal for a mechanized rubber-tapping machine that greatly facilitates and speeds up the traditionally labor-intensive process of tapping rubber trees.

Malaysia wins WIPO Gold Medal for best invention.

An all-woman partnership from Malaysia, Mrs Hadibah Ismail and Mrs Noraieni Haji Mokhtar received the WIPO Gold Medal for the best invention presented in the Exhibition for SINE-SLAB a flexible pre-cast concrete product designed to fight coastal erosion. This product was developed at the Coastal and Offshore Engineering Institute at the University of Technology, Malaysia.



Positive contacts at Afro-Arab Trade Fair

On-line daily demonstrations of how to conduct patent searches together with an exhibition of winners of WIPO Gold Medals from the region ensured that the WIPO stand at the 4th Afro-Arab Trade Fair buzzed with activity from April 15 to 25.

The Fair attracted some 735 businesses from 11 African and 12 Arab countries and was jointly organized by the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It was opened by the President of Senegal Mr Abdou Diouf and Mr Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso and acting President of the OAU.

April 19 was nominated intellectual property day at the Fair and included presentations on

- Intellectual property information and its role in research and commerce



Visitors to the Fair sample what the WIPO stand has to offer

The winners of the WIPO Gold Medals were selected by a jury of five; medals were awarded to:

- ERAD an Algerian company producing pastries and biscuits
- CHOCSEN a Senegalese company producing coffee, mustard and milk products
- CONDAK a Senegalese company producing canned goods

- Trademarks and their significance in marketing
- Intellectual property in the digital age

At the end of intellectual property day, prizes and WIPO Gold Medals for innovative enterprises

were awarded to three companies amongst much media attention.

WIPO staff members made many positive contacts during the fair and plan to return to the next Afro-Arab Fair in two years time, in the meantime continuing to build up WIPO's network of contacts in the region.

WIPO hosts Contemporary Art Exhibit loaned by Geneva Cantonal Fund

Selected art works from the collection of the Geneva Cantonal Fund for Decorative and Visual Arts went on public display at WIPO headquarters on May 3. This was the first such collaboration between the Fund and an international organization in Geneva on this large scale.

The Director General of WIPO and the President of the Fund, Mr. Laurent Moutinot, welcomed this partnership as a positive step towards bringing the international organizations closer to the local community and making visual arts more accessible to the public. Dr. Idris said, "We are delighted and honored to be able to display this impressive collection of contempo-

rary works of art at WIPO." He added, "It is only fitting that WIPO, which promotes the protection of cultural and artistic creativity, should collaborate with the Cantonal Fund to bring to the public eye works by talented contemporary artists." Such works show how intellectual property beautifies our surroundings and enriches our life.

News from National Offices

Korea moves closer to creating its cyber patent office

From the beginning of this year applicants have been able to make on-line electronic filings for patents, utility models, industrial designs and trademarks at the Korean Industrial Property Office via KIPONET (On-line Electronic Filing and Administration System). Plans are now being made to connect the KIPONET to the WIPONET and thus provide access to an impressive volume of patent-related information.

What is KIPONET?

KIPONET is an Internet-based on-line electronic filing and patent administration system. To gain access to the system the user needs to request the necessary software from KIPO (at <http://kiponet.kipo.go.kr>). The system allows the user to file patent applications on-line via a secured network and enables the KIPO to process, examine and publish the applications in an electronic working environment i.e., a paperless office.

Swedish Patent Office launches *InterPat News*

In March, the Swedish Patent Office launched *InterPat News*, its newsletter designed to bring together the latest information about patents, trademarks and designs as well as providing a forum for debate within these areas. The first issue features an article on the volume of information we are now swamped with and the importance of information brokering. Another article in this first issue describes the efforts by the European Commission to inform European companies about intellectual property rights with the establishment of a helpdesk.



Mr. Moutinot praised WIPO's willingness to support it in its efforts to promote contemporary visual arts. He said "this collaboration between WIPO and the Cantonal Fund is a perfect opportunity to present the works of contemporary Geneva-based artists to members of the public and to the wider international community".

The Cantonal Fund, which is responsible for promoting and encouraging the visual arts at the regional level, lends art works to local public institutions. Up to 90% of the collection, which features contemporary artists from different countries, is displayed in this way. Its association with WIPO also reflects the Cantonal Government's desire to create

stronger bonds with the Geneva-based international community.

The selection of works to be displayed at WIPO is made up of paintings by some 20 artists. The exhibition consists mainly of abstract paintings but also includes examples of other expressions of contemporary art.

Calendar of meetings

June 14 and 15 (Geneva)

Standing Committee on Information Technologies (Third Session)

The Committee will discuss and prepare a draft strategic plan for the twenty-first century with a view to providing overall policy directions to all information technology-related activities within the SCIT.

Invitations: As members, the States members of WIPO and other delegations that the Committee has admitted as members; as observers, other States and certain organizations.

June 15 (Geneva)

Orientation Meeting on the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a New Act of the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs

The Secretariat of WIPO will give background information on the Diplomatic Conference (see below).

Invitations: All States and organizations invited to the Diplomatic Conference (see below).

June 16 to July 6 (Geneva)

Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of a New Act of the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs

The Diplomatic Conference is expected to adopt a new Act of the Hague Agreement as well as Regulations thereunder.

Invitations: As ordinary members, the States members of WIPO; as special members, the African Intellectual Property Organization, the African Regional Industrial Property Organization and the European Community; and, as observers, the States members of the United Nations but not of WIPO as well as certain intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

July 5 to 7 (Geneva)

Intergovernmental Committee, Rome Convention (convened jointly with ILO and UNESCO)

The Intergovernmental Committee will review the status of the international protection of neighboring rights under the Rome Convention.

Invitations: States members of the Intergovernmental Committee and, as observers, other States members of the United Nations and certain organizations.

August 2 and 3 (Geneva)

Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Indigenous Peoples

To facilitate an exchange of views among policymakers and indigenous people concerning more effective application and possible improvements of the intellectual property system to protect traditional knowledge.

Invitations: Member States of WIPO; international and national governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned; representatives of indigenous groups and local communities and members of the public.

September 6 to 17 (Geneva)

Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (Third Session)

The Committee will continue its work based upon the results achieved at its second session, with regard to the draft Patent Law Treaty, and other issues.

Invitations: As members, the States members of WIPO and other delegations that the Committee has admitted as members; as observers, other States and certain organizations.

September 13 (Geneva)

**WIPO Industrial Advisory Commission
(Second Session)**

The Industry Advisory Commission will meet in its second session to follow up on discussions began at its first session held on February 4 and 5, 1999. This session of the IAC will focus in particular on the intellectual property implications of electronic commerce in light of the WIPO Conference on Electronic Commerce and Intellectual Property and that begins the following day.

Invitations: Members of the IAC. Eminent representatives of industry groups in the market sector compose the IAC.

September 14 to 16 (CICG Geneva)

**Conference on Electronic Commerce
and Intellectual Property**

The Conference will address the impact of electronic commerce on intellectual property and will include plenary sessions on general developments in electronic commerce and their implications for intellectual property, as well as workshops on the various areas of WIPO's work program associated with electronic commerce, such as Internet domain names, patents, the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), work on a protocol to the WPPT on audiovisual works, the use of trademarks on the Internet and the use of electronic commerce tools in the delivery of intellectual property services. The Conference will also examine the different levels of awareness and the resulting differential participation in electronic commerce.

Invitations: Member States of WIPO, other States members of the United Nations, international/regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and any interested members of the public, against payment of a registration fee.

September 20 to 29 (Geneva)

**Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO
(Thirty-fourth Series of Meetings)**

All Bodies of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO will meet in their ordinary sessions.

Invitations: As members, the States members of WIPO; as observers, other States and certain organizations.

November 8 to 10 (Geneva)

Working Group on Biotechnology

To develop an inventory of current issues in the field of biotechnology related to intellectual property to serve as a basis for information exchange and study by WIPO.

Invitations: Experts from various sectors and interest groups relevant to biotechnology.

November 15 (Geneva)

**Regional Consultations Concerning Copyright and
Related Rights Issues**

Each of the regions concerned will hold a separate consultation meeting on the issues to be discussed at the subsequent Third Session of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights.

Invitations: States members of WIPO and/or of the Berne Union from various regions.

November 16 to 20 (Geneva)

**Standing Committee on Copyright and Related
Rights (Third Session)**

The Committee will continue its work based on the results of its second session (May 4 to 11, 1999).

Invitations: As members, the States members of WIPO and/or of the Berne Union, and the European Community; as observers, other States and certain organizations.

Products

The following new products were issued by WIPO in May 1999:

General Information brochure (1999 Edition) (English, French and Spanish) No. 400(E/F/S), free

Annual Report 1998 (English) No. 441(E), free

CD-ROM Industrial Property Statistics for 1996 No. CD/IP/STAT/1996, 60 Swiss francs.

WIPO publications may be obtained from the Information Products Section:

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34, chemin des Colombettes

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Switzerland

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fax: 41 22 740 18 12

e-mail: publications.mail@wipo.int

Orders should indicate: (a) the number or letter code of the publication desired, the language (E for English, F for French etc.), the number of copies; (b) the full address for mailing; (c) the mail mode (surface or air). Prices cover surface mail.

Bank transfers should be made to WIPO account No. 487080-81, at the Swiss Credit Bank, 1211 Geneva 70, Switzerland.

