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Geneva
October 1999

Roundtable highlights intellectual property system as key factor in development

Photo: Mercedes Martinez Dozal



Dr. Idris with Mr. Betsimifira Fredo, Minister of Information, Culture and Communication of Madagascar (left) and Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary General of UNCTAD (right)

Intellectual Property, the New Millennium and the Least Developed Countries was the theme of the first High Level Interregional Roundtable for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), held at WIPO headquarters in Geneva on September 30. The Roundtable brought together participants from 38 LDCs for discussions aimed at articulating policy and technical issues in intellectual property in the era of the knowledge-based economy that are of particular relevance for LDCs.

Opening the High Level Roundtable, WIPO Director General, Dr. Kamil Idris, said the means of measuring a nation's economic strength have changed. "Information and knowledge have

already emerged as new factors of production and will soon rival the classical components of the economy, such as land, labor and capital," he said. "In a knowledge-based society, intellectual property will be used as a major source, as a critical tool, for economic growth and economic development.

"Dr. Idris stressed that "LDCs have to set their own priorities" in their cooperation with WIPO and he pledged that the Organization would support them in implementing those priorities.

The Roundtable was addressed by Mr. Betsimifira Fredo, Minister of Information, Culture and Communication of Madagascar and Mr. H. Olympio, Minister of the Promotion of the State of Law

and Democracy of Togo; and keynote speeches were made by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Mr. M. J. Denis Bélisle, Executive Director of the International Trade Center (ITC).

Professor Deepak Nayyar from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi made the key presentation on the theme of the Roundtable. He highlighted the importance of public investment in technologies for development and stressed the need for governance of knowledge for development, e.g., regulating, what he termed, the restrictive business practices of transnational corporations and making some modifications to

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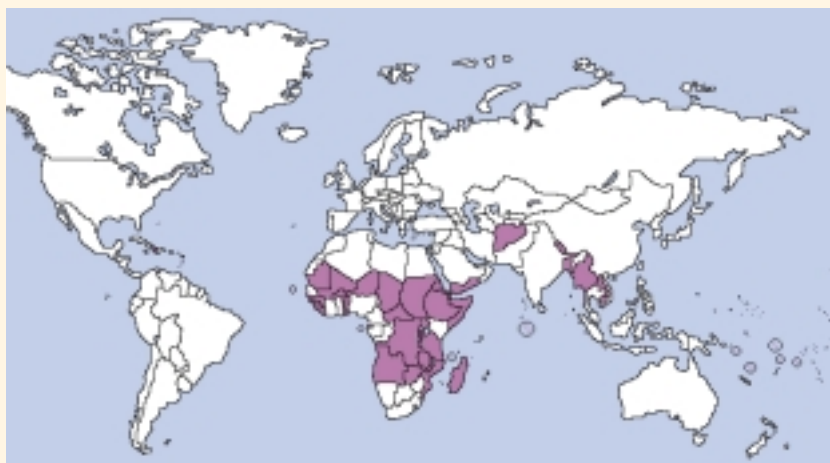
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relevant international instruments to make them conducive to the spread and diffusion of technology.

All the speakers underlined the need for the least developed countries to seize the opportunities presented by the emergence of knowledge-based industries. They stressed the importance of intellectual property as a critical factor in enabling least developed countries to compete in the global market place and to foster sustainable development. Intellectual property creations and protection are increasingly recognized as key factors in attracting foreign investment and promoting the transfer of technology.

Knowledge, information and technology — the value of which is captured through the intellectual property system — lie at the heart of contemporary development. For LDCs to break away from their marginalization and participate more actively in global economic processes, they must be supported in developing their national intellectual property infrastructures as part of the reorientation of their economies.

Recognizing the decisive role that knowledge could play in wealth creation and development in the new millennium, participants asked WIPO to consider initiatives that would ensure that traditional knowledge was not excluded from the wealth-creating mechanisms.



LDCs (see list below) are shown in color on the map

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Africa (33) | Lesotho | Asia&Pacific (14) | Latin America &Caribbean (1) |
| Angola | Liberia | Afghanistan | Haiti |
| Benin | Madagascar | Bangladesh | |
| Burkina Faso | Malawi | Bhutan | |
| Burundi | Mali | Cambodia | |
| Cape Verde | Mauritania | Lao PDR | |
| Central African Republic | Mozambique | Maldives | |
| Chad | Niger | Myanmar | |
| Comoros | Rwanda | Nepal | |
| Congo | Sao Tome and Principe | Yemen | |
| Djibouti | Sierra Leone | Kiribati | |
| Equatorial Guinea | Somalia | Samoa | |
| Eritrea | Sudan | Solomon Islands | |
| Ethiopia | Tanzania | Tuvalu | |
| Gambia | Togo | Vanuatu | |
| Guinea | Uganda | | |
| Guinea-Bissau | Zambia | | |

Issues of particular concern to LDCs:

Information and Communication Technologies:

The Internet offers unique challenges and opportunities for developing countries. While access to the Internet in the LDCs is still limited, the global needs and concerns of these countries need to be taken into consideration to ensure that the global communications revolution is truly global.

Global Intellectual Property Issues:

The traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities has significant economic value in areas such as biotechnology, entertainment, and education as well as providing a basis for the preservation and conservation of biological diversity and the sharing of its benefits. For example, in the context of entertainment, the music industry has recently become one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. WIPO is exploring ways in which protection of creativity and innovation can be made available to holders of traditional knowledge by means of intellectual property protection.

The TRIPS Agreement, Technology Transfer, Foreign Direct Investment:

Trade in intellectual property is increasingly influencing the growth and development of nations. The panel discussion addressed the implications of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS Agreement) for LDCs in the areas of enforcement mechanisms, technology transfer and foreign direct investment. The deadline for LDCs to comply with their obligations under the TRIPS Agreement is January 1, 2006.

WIPO assistance with TRIPS implementation

The new millennium begins with a crucial intellectual property milestone on January 1, 2000 as many countries, as members of WTO, must ensure that their national legislative and administrative structures conform with the requirements set out in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). The need for compliance with TRIPS obligations in the run-up to the new millennium has brought about an unprecedented effort on the part of WIPO in providing the necessary intensive and carefully focused technical assistance to the countries concerned.

A brief history of WIPO-WTO cooperation

The General Assembly of WIPO mandated the Organization in its 1994 and 1995 sessions to study and to provide assistance to the member States of WIPO on matters related to the World Trade

Organization (WTO), particularly on the TRIPS Agreement. The resolutions of the two sessions also led to the Agreement between the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization (WIPO-WTO Agreement) in 1995, which came into force on January 1, 1996.

Pursuant to the mandate of the WIPO General Assembly and the WIPO-WTO Agreement, the Organization carried out extensive programs of development cooperation activities related to the TRIPS Agreement from January 1, 1996. These activities were mainly organized in response to requests from developing country member States of WIPO. These activities included legislative advice, awareness building and human resource development, institution building and modernization of intellectual property and enforcement systems.

Legislative advice

In the area of legislative advice, 84 developing countries and regional organizations were assisted in the preparation of 154 draft laws in the field of intellectual property (20 in 1996, 54 in 1997, 42 in 1998 and 38 in the first half of 1999). WIPO also prepared draft provisions to amend and modernize existing laws and made comments and suggestions on 148 draft laws (30 in 1996, 40 in 1997, 47 in 1998 and 31 in the first half of 1999) received from 94 developing countries and secretariats of regional organizations in developing countries.

Human resource development

The human resource development program of WIPO has always been a central part of its cooperation for development program. It was re-oriented, however, to include subjects of the TRIPS Agreement. Its activities involved, in particular, organizing some 96 regional meetings, including eight "mega"

What is the link between WIPO and WTO?

The TRIPS Agreement was concluded as part of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) and came into force on January 1, 1995. The link between the intellectual property system and global trade has been brought into sharp focus by the Agreement. It is binding on all members of WTO, most of which are also member States of WIPO, including the majority of developing countries, and it forms an integral part of the multilateral trading system established under WTO.

meetings in various regions of the world, 198 subregional and national meetings, including training courses, and around 86 interregional courses and seminars. Some 200 study attachments were arranged for the benefit of developing countries, and on-the-job training took place in 58 developing countries. Preparation of periodicals, studies and reference materials to promote awareness of protection of intellectual property rights in general and of the TRIPS Agreement in particular have also been undertaken. The establishment of the WIPO Academy shows the importance WIPO places on human resources development in order to provide more complete assistance to developing countries in the area of intellectual property.

Upgrading intellectual property offices

Another important area is to assist developing countries in building up or upgrading their intellectual property offices with an adequate institutional infrastructure and resources, qualified staff, modern management techniques and access to information technology support systems. In this connec-

tion, WIPO sent advisory missions to 102 developing countries and sponsored visits of some 300 officials from developing countries to offices in industrialized countries to study various aspects of modernization. Regarding computerization, some 94 countries received computer equipment from WIPO, and, with the assistance of WIPO experts, 34 developing countries have developed the necessary software for the automation of their intellectual property offices. WIPO has provided more than 250 CD-ROM workstations to national industrial property and copyright offices and developed industrial property information services for 79 developing countries. Strengthening the coverage and capacity of the present system and assisting developing countries in examination of patent applications, particularly in high-technology fields, have been given priority.

Enforcement

Enforcement of intellectual property rights, as an integral part of the TRIPS Agreement, was incorporated into the WIPO programs in January 1996. In order to raise

awareness of enforcement in the area of intellectual property rights, WIPO has organized one interregional, six regional, four subregional and 48 national meetings concentrating wholly or partly on the enforcement provisions of the TRIPS Agreement. These meetings, however, were in addition to the meetings mentioned above, where enforcement issues were also often included.

Publications

A great number of documents have been published by WIPO since 1996 in respect of the TRIPS Agreement. In addition, WIPO published a study, "Implications of the TRIPS Agreement on the Treaties Administered by WIPO" in June 1996, and in September 1996, four additional studies made by other institutes or consultants were published by WIPO.

Translation of laws

Assistance provided by WIPO on translation of laws and regulations between January 1996 and June 30, 1999, went to 150 countries, for which laws and regulations have been translated into Arabic, English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Communication of emblems

Pursuant to Article 3 of the WIPO-WTO Agreement, communications of emblems and transmittals of objections under the TRIPS Agreement have been administered by the International Bureau of WIPO since January 1996, in accordance with the procedures applicable under Article 6ter of the Paris Convention.

Cooperation activities

Numerous cooperation activities have been undertaken by the two Organizations pursuant to Article 4 of the WIPO-WTO Agreement, which requires enhancement of cooperation between WIPO and WTO in rendering legal-technical assistance. These activities included attending each other's meetings as an observer, participating in each other's symposia, workshops and seminars and providing experts as requested. In particular, WIPO and WTO have jointly organized symposia every year since 1996.

Joint initiative

To further enhance cooperation, a joint initiative was launched by WIPO and WTO in July 1998 to assist developing countries that are members of WTO meet their commitment by January 1, 2000. The joint initiative was in the form of a joint communication by the Directors General of the two Organizations, Dr. Kamil Idris of WIPO and Mr. Renato Ruggiero of WTO, and was sent to the ministers in charge of the two Organizations in each of the developing countries concerned. Letters

of acknowledgement and requests for assistance were received from 34 countries or territories from July 1998 to June 30, 1999.

Almost all developing countries have benefited from the legal-technical assistance programs and activities of WIPO. Overall, a total of 129 developing and least-developed countries and one territory benefited from the development for cooperation activities of WIPO that either dealt entirely with the TRIPS Agreement or were undertaken with a view to facilitating implementation of that Agreement.

Draft Patent Law Treaty ready for the Diplomatic Conference

Delegates from over 70 countries put the final touches to a proposed treaty that would make it easier for inventors around the world to obtain patent protection. The Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP), which met from September 6 to 14, unanimously agreed to submit this draft text of the Patent Law Treaty (PLT) for negotiations at a Diplomatic Conference to take place from May 11 to June 2, 2000.

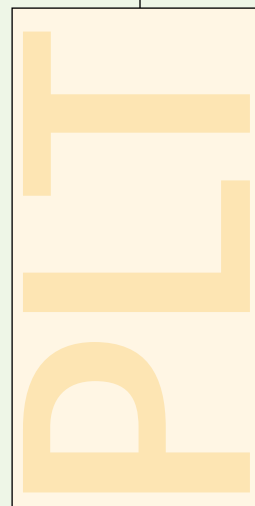
The rapid pace of technological developments and the globalization of trade has resulted in the need for mechanisms that provide for speedy and cost-effective protection for new inventions. The proposed Treaty is designed to streamline and harmonize the administrative formal requirements set out by national patent offices for the filing of patent applications and the maintenance of patents. These requirements concern issues such as obtaining a filing date, electronic filing, representation of the applicant by others, conditions for extension of time limits and restoration of rights and priority claims.

The SCP agreed upon the text of all the provisions that will be contained in the basic proposal for the Diplomatic Conference. It also

decided to link the PLT more closely to the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), a WIPO-administered treaty that allows an inventor to apply for patent protection in multiple countries through the submission of a single international application. Closer alignment of the proposed PLT with the PCT would mean that patent formalities or administrative requirements would, to a large extent, follow common standards both for national and international applications. In this context, applicants would be able to use the PCT request form for both international and national applications if an indication to that effect is filed with that request. Agreement was also reached on the question of time extensions with respect to missed time limits.

A small number of issues remain open for discussion at the Diplomatic Conference, including the question of exceptions to mandatory representation by qualified individuals of applicants and patent owners in patent application procedures.

The meeting was attended by delegations of 77 Member States, four intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and 19 non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



Visits

WIPO Director General pledges support to Bulgaria's IP system

WIPO and the Government of Bulgaria have agreed to continue collaboration to modernize and upgrade Bulgaria's intellectual property system to ensure that it can realize the benefits of the information society in the next century. This came during two days of talks, on October 5 and 6, between the Director General of WIPO, Dr. Kamil Idris, and the Bulgarian President, Mr. Petar Stoyanov, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Mr. Alexander Boshkov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Nadzhda Mihailova, and the Minister of Culture, Mrs. Emma Moskova.

Photo: Binying Wang



During discussions, the President of Bulgaria, Mr. Peter Stoyanov (right) referred to his country's recent successes in clamping down on piracy of audiovisual materials and said Dr. Idris's visit was an encouragement to his country.

Dr. Idris applauded the government of Bulgaria for its long-standing and continued commitment to intellectual property protection and reaffirmed WIPO's readiness to support and assist Bulgaria in strengthening its intellectual property system. In a meeting with President Stoyanov, Dr. Idris underlined the central importance of an effective intellectual property system as a mechanism for wealth creation and social and cultural well-being, particularly in the context of the emergence of knowledge-based economies. Dr. Idris outlined WIPO's technical cooperation activities with countries in transition and pledged the Organization's continued support to Bulgaria through a tailor-made National Focused Action Plan. The Director General said the WIPO Academy would cooperate with Bulgarian academic circles in organizing an international seminar on the teaching of intellectual property next year in Bulgaria.

President Stoyanov underlined his country's long-standing record of success in the field of intellectual property and its continued commitment to meeting international obligations in the protection of intellectual property rights. President Stoyanov referred to his country's recent successes in clamping down on piracy of audiovisual materials. Bulgaria has recently reinforced its intellectual property legislation and strengthened its enforcement capacities. The President said the visit of Dr. Idris was an encouragement to Bulgaria.

At a meeting with Mr. Boshkov, Dr. Idris presented WIPO's vision on the role of intellectual property and intellectual capital as main components of knowledge-based economies of the next century. He emphasized the importance of

information and electronic commerce in the information society. Further details discussed included the possible establishment of a network of national centers to promote innovation. Details of Bulgaria's cooperation with WIPO were discussed in a meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister, Mrs. Mihailova, including new global intellectual property issues, such as biotechnology, biodiversity, the Internet and electronic commerce and their impact on economic development. WIPO will assist Bulgaria in organizing specialized training courses on intellectual property for the judiciary, customs and law enforcement officers. Minister of Culture, Mrs. Moskova addressed the issue of intellectual property in respect of folklore, museum exhibits and cultural artifacts and pointed out that her

Ministry is preparing draft laws on those questions.

In an address to some 400 members of the academic, research, legal and business communities at the University of Sofia, the Director General outlined WIPO's global intellectual property development strategy to meet the challenges of the new millennium. In view of the growing importance of intellectual property within key policy areas, the Director General emphasized the importance of collective leadership, involving member States and market sector interests, to ensure globalization without marginalization.

Photo: Binying Wang



Mrs. Nadzhda Mihailova, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Idris considered new global intellectual property issues including biotechnology, biodiversity, the Internet, and electronic commerce.

Dr. Idris emphasized that countries like Bulgaria must be supported in their efforts to fully develop their creative potential in order to stimulate economic prosperity. "In the digital economy of the next century", he said, "answering these questions means a country like Bulgaria would have a wonderful opportunity to attract foreign investment, to support the local inventors and innovators, to protect its own cultural heritage and folklore, to upgrade its own indigenous technology, to disseminate effectively and efficiently the

wealth of technological information to create wealth for the nation and to apply self-reliance".

Dr. Idris also visited the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria. Bulgaria is party to all the major intellectual property treaties

administered by WIPO. Bulgaria has been a member of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works since 1921, and it has been a member of WIPO since May 19, 1970.

Challenges facing the IP community

During his visit, the Director General identified a number of challenges confronting policy makers and the intellectual property community at large. These included the need to demystify intellectual property in order to reach "the grass roots and the main beneficiaries of the intellectual property system". Simplification, easy access, effective communications and facilitation of working methods and procedures to ensure that the intellectual property system is widely used and understood as a tool for economic growth and development were identified as important challenges. He noted the need to broaden the intellectual property debate to consider "not only legal implications of intellectual property ... but also the human, social and economic aspects of intellectual property".

WIPO Director General meets Chinese Premier, visits key cities

WIPO Director General, Dr. Kamil Idris met with the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhu Rongji, in Beijing on October 13 to discuss bilateral relations. Dr. Idris described the meeting as "very useful and a reflection of the excellent relations between WIPO and the Government of China."

The meeting with the Prime Minister, which was also attended by Mrs. Jiang Ying, Commissioner of the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO), Mr. Wang Zhongfu, Commissioner, State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) and Mr. Yu Youxian, Commissioner of the National Copyright Administration of China (NCAC), came at the end of a three-day visit to China that also took Dr. Idris to Shanghai and Kunming, known as the "City of Eternal Spring" in the southwest province of Yunnan.

In the meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr. Idris welcomed China's efforts to modernize and strengthen its intellectual property system. He underlined the importance of a robust intellectual property infrastructure in meeting the challenges of the next millennium and strengthening the knowledge-based economy. The Prime Minister, acknowledging WIPO's role in training Chinese experts and providing legal and technical assistance, expressed appreciation for WIPO's efforts to improve cooperation with China on intellectual property matters.

Whilst in Beijing, Dr. Idris attended the opening of the International Symposium on the Knowledge-based Economy and Intellectual



Dr. Idris receives an honorary doctoral degree from Fudan University, Shanghai. In his acceptance speech, he welcomed the positive steps taken by the University to include intellectual property in its curriculum.

Property where he discussed the growing importance of intellectual property in the digital age. The Symposium was jointly organized by the Chinese Government and WIPO.

During his visit to China, Dr. Idris received an honorary doctoral degree from Fudan University in Shanghai. He thanked University representatives as well as the Academic Degree Office of the State Council for the honor. In his acceptance speech, he reiterated the need for distinguished academic institutions like Fudan University to include intellectual property teaching in their curricula. He said Fudan University had made positive efforts in this area and that WIPO is prepared to assist the University in formulating programs for the teaching of intellectual property.

In Shanghai, Dr. Idris met with Mr. Xu Guangdi, Mayor of Shanghai, Mr. Yu Youxian, Commissioner of the NCAC and Mr. Wang Zhensheng, Director of the Academic Degree Office of the State Council, who came to Shanghai from Beijing to attend the conferment ceremony.

In Kunming, the Director General opened WIPO's Regional Symposium on Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights, which was jointly organized by WIPO and the Chinese Government. He also met with Mr. Li Jiating, Governor of Yunnan Province. Dr. Idris wrapped up his visit to Kunming with a stop-over at the International Horticulture Exhibition in the company of Governor Li.

Passing of a great African leader: Julius Nyerere

Photo: H. Salgado



Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere.

Dr. Kamil Idris, sent a message to His Excellency Mr. Benjamin W. Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to express his heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania on the death of former President Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere on October 14.

Speaking personally and on behalf of his colleagues at WIPO, the Director General paid tribute to the statesmanship of the late President, which Dr. Idris said had been characterized by unparalleled wisdom, stature, compassion and integrity. Dr. Idris paid homage to the late Mr. Nyerere's commitment to the people of the United Republic of Tanzania and to the continent of Africa. He

called Mr. Nyerere a beacon and a source of strength for all those who worked to ensure that Africa assumed its rightful place in international affairs and the global economy.

Despite his courageous battle with ill health, Mr. Nyerere took an active interest in the work of WIPO in recent years. He was a founding member and leading figure in the WIPO Policy Advisory Commission (PAC) which held its inaugural session in Geneva in April 1999. During this meeting, Mr. Nyerere stressed the importance of assisting developing countries in establishing effective intellectual property systems to promote higher levels of economic and social development and greater self-reliance.

Academy

WIPO and EPO academies working together to shed light on the value of patent information

From September 6 to 10 the European Patent Office, International Academy and the WIPO Academy pooled their expertise to organize "Patents—A Source of Information". This new course aims to provide participants with an insight on how patent information can be of value to all, and of particular relevance to developing countries.

The five-day course combined traditional teaching techniques with practical "hands-on" sessions aimed at familiarizing participants with the variety of means of obtaining information published in patent documents. In addition to four days at the Vienna Office of the European Patent Office, participants also spent an entire day at the Austrian Patent Office, where they had the opportunity to observe at first hand the workings of a national patent office.

The course was divided into six modules:

Module one

A basic overview of the nature of patent information—why the information is valuable and when such information may be disclosed to the public.

Module two

The role and work of the European Patent Organization.

Module three

The workings of the Austrian Patent Office, the processing of all industrial property rights including trademarks and designs plus its work as an international searching authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

Module four

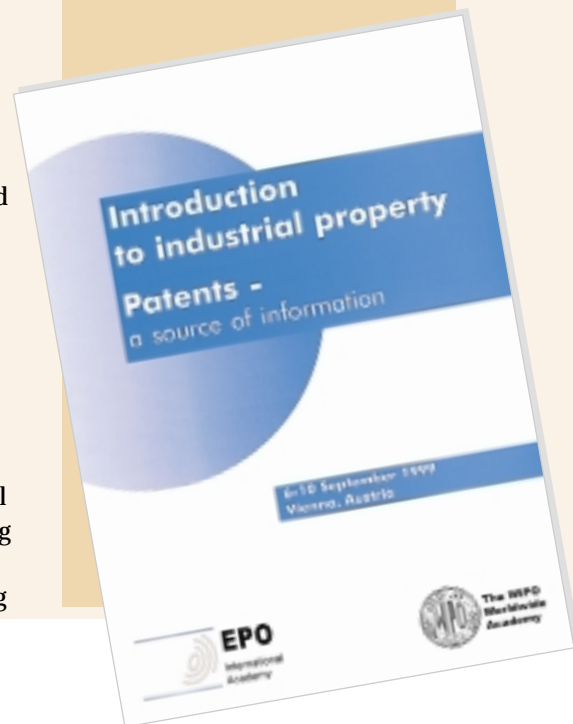
An overview of sources of patent information in printed form, CD-ROM and via databases both on, and separately from, the Internet.

Module five

The advantages of the Internet in disseminating patent information and the importance of web construction.

Module six

The course concluded with a brief overview of the marketing of patent information and the work of the United States Patent and Trademark Office in identifying customer needs in this area.



The WIPO Academy working with the Swedish Government to teach copyright law

From August 23 to September 3, WIPO and the Government of Sweden organized a two-week training course for some 20 students from 19 developing countries.

The course was divided into two sections. The first part was a study visit to WIPO headquarters in Geneva. The second part took place in Stockholm with lectures on copyright and related rights, supplemented by field trips.

Students began their work at WIPO with a lively introduction to its history and current activities before tackling the basic concepts of copyright law. Having established the building blocks of copyright law, the students were equipped to explore:

- WIPO's role in the international protection of copyright

- the role of international conventions in the protection of copyright
- collective management of copyright
- attempts made to protect expressions of folklore and traditional knowledge.

The first week of the course concluded with an overview of the latest developments in this field, and in particular the protection provided by the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT).

The students then moved on to Stockholm and the Swedish Patent and Registration Office for an overview of IP law in Sweden. This was followed by a presentation on the experience of Nordic countries in the protection of expressions of

folklore. The students covered a rich variety of topics whilst in Sweden, including:

- work carried out by the Swedish Performing Rights Society, the Swedish Group of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, the Swedish Artists and Musicians Interest Organization and the Swedish Reprographic Rights Organization
- new challenges for copyright protection in the digital era
- music piracy and how to fight it.

The course concluded with a roundtable discussion on the role of copyright and related rights followed by individual country reports by the students.

Electronic commerce updates - by e-mail, of course.

On Monday 25 October, WIPO posted its first Ecommerce Update containing the latest information about progress in the field of electronic commerce and news of forthcoming meetings.

This posting included news of:

- approval of the ten-point Digital Agenda by WIPO's General Assemblies
- highlights from the WIPO International Conference on Electronic Commerce and Intellectual Property, plus news of the CD-ROM to be issued in December encompassing the Conference material and audio files of each presentation
- news on domain names, uniform dispute resolution, and ICANN
- WIPO meetings to take place in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Russian Federation in December.

This new service plans to post some six mailings every year, which will include links and, where needed, pdf downloads. Subscribers to the WIPO Magazine wishing to receive Ecommerce Updates by e-mail should contact ecommerce@wipo.int and indicate whether they would like to receive them in English, French or Spanish.

Cooperation for development

Two-day forum of SAARC countries yields concrete proposals for sub-regional cooperation in the field of IP

The Nepalese Minister of Industry, His Excellency Omkar Prasad Shrestha, opened a two-day forum organized by WIPO and the Ministry of Industry in Kathmandu, Nepal on September 7 for member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to identify areas in which they could work together in the field of IP.

The forum was animated by experts from the region including the permanent secretaries of the Ministries of Industry from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan as well as the Secretary General of SAARC, Ambassador D.E.N Rodrigo. Participants were predominantly senior officials responsible for intellectual property rights, policies, and administration in member States of SAARC.

The forum commenced by recognizing the importance of intellectual property, its impact on development policies in diverse fields, and its increasingly important role in the technological, economic, and social spheres of the SAARC countries. In considering means of strengthening cooperation in the

field of intellectual property among the SAARC member States, the participants unanimously agreed on a plan of action for several areas. The plan calls for:

- using intellectual property for accelerated national and regional development
- embracing the challenge of information technology and WIPONET to promote cooperation among intellectual property offices and other institutions
- developing human resources and public outreach programs
- creating policy and an institutional framework for SAARC cooperation in intellectual property
- continuing cooperation with WIPO.

Participants expressed the hope that their work identifying areas for agreement would soon pave the way for a formal arrangement among the SAARC countries on cooperation.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

The SAARC is composed of seven states: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It was established in December 1995, with the objective of improving the standard of living of the population in the region through greater economic cooperation among the member countries.

Cooperation with other organizations

WIPO working with the Office of the UNHCHR on its Indigenous Fellowship Program

On September 7, 1999, WIPO welcomed four fellows from the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Indigenous Fellowship Program to WIPO headquarters in Geneva. During their one-day stay, they were given a lively overview of the work of the Organization together with a basic introduction to copyright and industrial property rights. A highlight of their stay was a thorough briefing on WIPO's work in the protection of traditional knowledge and creativity. All four were invited to return to WIPO in November to attend the Roundtable on Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge, where many issues covered during their brief stay will be more fully addressed.



The WIPO Fact Finding Missions to explore the difficulties faced by indigenous people and local communities in protecting intellectual property rights have met with people from across the globe including (from top to bottom) Maasai in the United Republic of Tanzania, the Lakota tribe from North America, and the Tiwi, an Aboriginal clan from Australia.

The UNHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Program

This Program offers an opportunity to indigenous people to spend five months in Geneva both at the office of the UNHCHR and with other specialized agencies where they learn more about the United Nations, human rights, and work of specialized agencies that is of particular relevance to indigenous people. The goal of the program is to equip fellows with sufficient knowledge that they may return to their communities and disseminate what they have learned.

WIPO joins in UNESCO workshop on indigenous people

Representatives from WIPO took part in a UNESCO Workshop "Cultural Stakes of the International Decade for Indigenous People" that took place in Paris from October 18-20, 1999. The workshop brought together some 40 participants, including indigenous persons from various parts of the world as well as representatives of UNESCO, UNHCHR, and the International Labor Organization (ILO). Midway through the UN's International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995 to 2004), the objective of the workshop was to provide indigenous people and UN agencies with an opportunity to discuss proposals for projects and programs meeting the needs of indigenous people in cultural matters.

Registration and Classification

Changes to the Nice Classification agreed

From October 4 to 8, the Preparatory Working Group of the Committee of Experts of the Nice Union held its twentieth session in Geneva to consider proposals for changes to the 7th Edition of the Nice Classification.

In addition to the work of reviewing a host of proposals for modifications to the list of classes, they also considered changes to the classification of goods relating to “blinds”,



“shades”, “curtains”, and “drapes” plus a proposal for the class of “Retail Store Services”.

The Working Group agreed to prepare a document with all the approved changes to the 7th Edition of the Classification for submission to the Committee of Experts of the Nice Union for adoption. They will hold their next session in Geneva in October 2000.

What is the Nice Classification

The Nice Classification consists of a list of goods and services for the purpose of registering trademarks and service marks. There are 34 classes for goods and eight for services—and an alphabetical list of the goods and services. The latter comprises some 11,000 items. Both lists are, from time to time, amended and supplemented by the Nice Committee of Experts on which all contracting States to the Nice Agreement (1957) are represented. The current, seventh edition of the Classification entered into force on January 1, 1997.

Although only 58 States are party to the Nice Agreement, the trademark offices of more than 130 States, as well as the Secretariat of WIPO, the Benelux Trademark Office, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) and the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) of the European Communities, use the Classification.

First Seminar on WIPO's new treaty on Industrial Designs - the Geneva Act

On December 10, 1999, WIPO will hold its first Seminar on The Geneva Act, WIPO's latest international treaty, which aims to offer a cost-effective and user-friendly means of protecting industrial designs in countries across the world.

The Seminar will deal with the origins and objectives of the new Act, plus the innovations of the Geneva Act as compared with the existing system. In addition, it will cover the initial reactions of both national administrations and users to the new system that will

need to be put in place in the years to come. Many of the speakers chosen to present this comprehensive course were key players in the diplomatic conference that led to the adoption of the Act with first-hand experience of the workings of many national systems. The course is intended for anyone interested in the international protection of industrial designs, whether national administrators, practitioners or users. The Seminar will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous interpretation between the two languages

WIPO compares notes with its fellow UN agencies at the Frankfurt Book Fair

The Seminar will take place at:

Intercontinental Hotel
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex, 7-9
1211 Geneva

on:

Friday, December 10, 1999
Registration from 9 a.m.
Opening of the Seminar at 10 a.m.
Closure at approximately 5 p.m.

Registration forms may be obtained from "Meetings" on the WIPO website <http://www.wipo.int> or by contacting:

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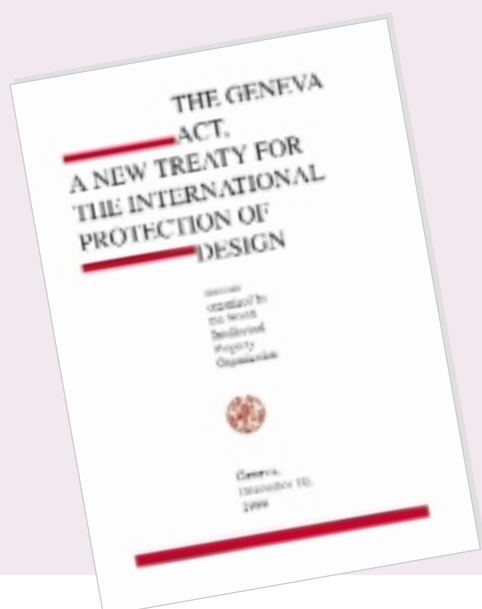
Mr. Patrice Piguet, Chief, Sales and Marketing Section, United Nations, Geneva, at the WIPO section of the UN stand at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

Some 6,500 booksellers from 105 countries exhibited their publications on eighteen floors in the heart of Frankfurt. This is the most important event for publishers throughout the world, and the venue for the annual UN Inter-agency Meeting of Sales and Marketing Officers. From October 13-18, the United Nations stand, where WIPO publications could be freely consulted, attracted sales agents and booksellers interested in WIPO's new publications and news of its best selling publications, such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty, International Patent Classification and Intellectual Property Reading Material.

The UN Inter-Agency meeting took place the day before the opening of the Book Fair and brought together some 40 representatives from 25 UN agencies. Issues of common interest addressed included:

- the difficulties of distributing and selling publications in developing countries where book prices and postal charges are prohibitively high
- using sales representatives to place publications in new markets and stimulate sales
- publishing on-line
- dealing with obsolete surplus stocks
- using corporate sponsorship to cover printing costs.

The meeting revealed several areas where WIPO could benefit from increased cooperation with the UN and where improvements could be made to enhance the sale and distribution of WIPO publications.



Calendar of meetings

November 15 to 22 (CICG, Geneva)

Working Group on IPC Reform

The Working Group will continue its discussions of the IPC reform aimed at the accommodation of the IPC to the electronic information era.

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

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.

November 29 to December 3 (Geneva)

PCT Committee for Administrative and Legal Matters

The Committee will discuss proposed amendments of the PCT Regulations and proposed modifications of the PCT Administrative Instructions concerning certain aspects of the processing of international applications which relate to the draft Patent Law Treaty that will be submitted as the basic proposal to the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of the Patent Law Treaty to be held in Geneva from May 11 to June 2, 2000.

Invitations: Contracting States of the PCT, International Searching Authorities and International Preliminary Examining Authorities, and, as observers, member States of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and certain intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

December 6 & 7 (Geneva)

Workshop on Implementation Issues of the WCT and the WPPT

The Workshop will examine implementation issues of the provisions on limitations and exceptions as well as technological measures of protection contained in the two Treaties.

Invitations: States members of WIPO and/or the Berne Union, the European Community and certain organizations.

December 6 to 10 (Geneva)

Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) Plenary (Fourth session) and SCIT Working Groups (Second session)

The Committee will discuss, among other issues, the draft Information Technology Strategic Implementation Plan and the SCIT Work Program for the 2000-2001 biennium. The Working Groups will continue to deal with matters regarding the WIPO Global Information Network and consider the revision of WIPO Standards.

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

December 8 & 9 a.m. (Geneva)

Advisory Committee on the Management of Copyright and Related Rights in Global Information Networks

The Committee will continue its work analyzing the various network based rights management systems and discuss the establishment of an observatorium to follow future developments in the field.

Invitations: States members of WIPO and/or the Berne Union, the European Community and certain organizations.

December 9 p.m. & 10 (Geneva)

Workshop on Liability of On-Line Service Providers

The Workshop will discuss existing and foreseen national and regional legislation regarding service providers' liability, the practical implementation of such legislation in the private sector and whether international harmonization is advisable or necessary.

Invitations: States members of WIPO and/or the Berne Union, the European Community and certain organizations.

Year 2000

March 22 to 24 (Geneva)

Working Group on Constitutional Reform (First session)

The Working Group will consider and study proposals concerning constitutional reform and will report on its progress to the Assemblies of Member States in the year 2000.

Invitations: States members of WIPO and of the Paris and Berne Unions.

March 27 to 31 (Geneva)

Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (Fourth session)

The Committee will continue its work, based on the results of its Third session (November 8 to 12, 1999).

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.

May 11 to June 2 (CICG, Geneva)

Diplomatic Conference on Proposed Patent Law Treaty

The Diplomatic Conference is expected to adopt the Patent Law Treaty as well as Regulations thereunder.

Invitations: As ordinary members, the States members of WIPO and the States party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property; as special members, the African Intellectual Property Organization, the African Regional Industrial Property Organization, the Eurasian Patent Organization and the European Patent Organisation; as observers, the States members of the United Nations but not of WIPO or the Paris Union, as well as certain intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

June 5 to 9 (Geneva)

Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (Fourth session)

The Committee will continue its work based on the results of its third session (November 16 to 20, 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:

Set of 3 WIPO posters: (Arabic) No. TRIPOST/A, (Chinese) No. TRIPOST/C, (English) No. TRIPOST/E, (French) TRIPOST/F, (Russian) No. TRIPOST/R, (Spanish) No. TRIPOST/S, price not yet fixed

What is Copyright? (Arabic) No. L450CR/A, (Russian) No. L450CR/R, Free

What is an Industrial Design? (Arabic) No. L450ID/A, (Russian) L450ID/R, Free

What is a Patent? (Arabic) No. L450PA/A, (Russian) No. L450PA/R, Free

What is a Trademark? (Arabic) No. L450TM/A, (Russian) No. L450TM/R, Free

FAQs (Arabic), No. L450FQ/A, (Russian) No. L450FQ/R, Free

IPC Revision Concordance List - Seventh Edition CIB Table de concordance – septième édition, (English/French) No. 462(EF), 30 Swiss francs

IPC Official Catchword Index (English) No. 561(E), (French) No. 561(F), 70 Swiss francs each

