

## **WIPO Director General Daren Tang Remarks**

### **High-Level Policy Dialogue to Enhance Patent Search and Examination in the Asia-Pacific Region**

**Thursday 26 August 2021**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues and Friends,

A very good morning, good afternoon and good evening to all of you, wherever you happen to be joining from around the world.

It is my honor to welcome you to this High Level Dialogue to Enhance Patent Search and Examination in the Asia-Pacific Region, and a pleasure to have many old friends and familiar faces on this call.

Today's dialogue is the result of the continuing strong collaboration between WIPO and our friends in Singapore, and I would like to thank colleagues within WIPO's Singapore Office and at the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) for organizing today's event and for hosting us during IP Week.

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

At the Program and Budget Committee meeting last month, WIPO tabled its new 5 year Strategy Plan. In it, we laid out a vision where IP is used by all of our Members as a powerful tool for creating jobs, attracting investments, supporting business growth and developing economies.

The WIPO Singapore Office, which was inaugurated in 2005, is fully familiar with this development driven focus on IP. In fact, over the past 15 years, and working in tandem with the Singapore government and other stakeholders, the Office has provided technical assistance and capacity building to more than 1000 staff across 25 Member States, and we will continue to work hard to support your needs.

Going ahead, one of the areas of focus for WIPO will be on “impact driven” development, where we will also pay attention on how our support and collaboration creates real impact on the ground to your innovators, your creators, your entrepreneurs and your communities. This will ensure that the work that you do as IP offices gets even greater recognition from your governments, businesses and society.

Moving from “activity-based” to “impact driven” development will require that we work closely with IP offices in the region as our key partners, and we look forward to your support in this endeavor.

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Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends

The aim of this latest High-Level Dialogue is to facilitate the free and frank exchange of ideas around the critical areas of patent search and examination, which is core to the function of any IP office.

Two of the great strengths of the Asia-Pacific region are its rich diversity and sense of community. In this spirit, today’s session is an opportunity for IP offices from across the region to share best practices and discuss ways of improving examinations, work-sharing approaches and training tools.

We also hope it will broaden understanding of the ways in which other IP Offices approach the training of patent examiners and further discussion around the provision of external training support for small and medium sized offices.

Of course, knowledge sharing in the area of patent examination is already well established in the region. ASPEC, the ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation, is embedded across the nine participating IP Offices and is helping to fast track the patenting process with an average pendency rate of just eight months for the over 800 ASPEC requests submitted.

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As we emerge from the pandemic and embark on the post-COVID-19 economic recovery, swift and efficient patent search and examination – whether at a national or multilateral level – will continue to increase in importance.

Innovation and creativity are critical to realizing our shared ambitions of building back in an inclusive and sustainable way. For the IP community, our collective challenge is to provide innovators and creators with the ecosystems they need to develop their ideas and take them to the world.

Optimizing patent search and examination is a fundamental part of this process. This holds particularly true for the Asia-Pacific, which had seen rapid patent growth in the years leading up to the pandemic. Together, Asian and Oceanic nations now account for more than half of all applications filed under the PCT, up from 37% a decade previously. More broadly, almost two-thirds of all patent applications filed worldwide originate from Asia, with the continent home to nine of the world's top twenty offices.

This trend encompasses nations at all stages of development. For example, over the last five years in which statistics are available, patent applications have increased by 48 per cent in Cambodia, 11 per cent in Viet Nam, 7 per cent in Singapore and 6 per cent in Indonesia.

In many cases, this has been combined with reduction in average pendency. For instance, between 2017 and 2019, the offices of Thailand and India reduced their average pendency by more than eleven months. Tellingly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, in both cases this was accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of patent examiners. This is a good sign, as it shows national governments are providing their IP offices with more resources.

But throwing manpower at the issue is not sufficient, in and of itself. Offices also need to be innovative in finding ways to optimize patent search and examination. Ultimately, high quality and timely search and examination strengthens innovation ecosystems and promotes investment and innovation at the local level.

As we rebuild from the pandemic, WIPO is committed to working with IP Offices and other stakeholders across the region, to raise awareness of the important role IP plays

in job creation, economic growth and sustainable development, for the benefit of everyone, everywhere.

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Once again, it is a pleasure to open today's dialogue. WIPO is pleased to have such reliable and long standing partners in IPOS and the Government of Singapore.

It is also gratifying to see such a healthy turnout from across the region – proving, once again, that Asian and Pacific nations continue to put IP in the center of their growth and development strategies.

On behalf of WIPO, please accept my warm wishes for what will no doubt be a successful and thought-provoking exchange of ideas.

Thank you very much.