

Director General Keynote
Intellectual Property and Innovation Researchers Asia (IPIRA) Conference, March 24 to 27, 2021
(Check Against Delivery)

It is my pleasure to be able to join you at this year at the Third Innovation and Intellectual Property Researchers Asia Conference.

We are coming together at a time of crisis and opportunity. The pandemic is still ravaging countries and economies all over the world. But at the same time it has not stopped the globalization of innovation, and Asia continues its rise as a leading region for innovation and creativity.

7 out of 10 of IP filings now originate from Asia, and 6 out of 10 R&D dollars being spent in Asia. Asia now accounts for more than 50% of PCT filings. And in the 2020 WIPO Global Innovation Index, countries like China, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam are identified as global innovation leaders. It is therefore timely and important to hear the voices of IP academics and researchers from the Asian region.

As this is the first time I am addressing this Conference, and as the first DG of WIPO from Asia, I thought it would be apt for me to share some broader perspectives of IP and WIPO.

WIPO's vision is a world where innovation and creativity from anywhere is supported by intellectual property, for the good of everyone. It is the belief of the new Administration that IP must support not just the most advanced economies but also the developing and least-developed economies. It must not just support the biggest companies, but also entrepreneurs and SMEs. It must not be relevant to a handful of IP technicians and experts, but be connected to the men and women in the street.

To make this vision a reality, we will need to continue doing our core work well. For example, we will, as we have always done, provide value-added services to innovators and creators throughout the world, through the PCT, Madrid, Hague and Lisbon systems, as well as continue to build IT tools for IP offices to use. We will also carry on our work of bringing people together and finding partners to shape the future of the global IP ecosystem, for example in the work of our Committees and Working Groups.

However, beyond these, we must now step our work in helping countries use IP as a tool for development, and harness its power as a catalyst for jobs, enterprise growth and ultimately economic and social development. And we have to reach out to new stakeholders like SMEs, youths, women and communities, helping them understand and use IP to take their ideas to the world.

In line with these efforts, the WIPO Academy will evolve its work as well. It will start broadening its perspective from the transfer of knowledge to the building of skills. We have started on this work, and in 2020, the WIPO Academy and its partners trained over 152,000 persons all over the world, with 87 percent from developing countries.

We will also continue finding opportunities to support IP researchers, who play an important role in studying and understanding the impact of IP in specific areas, as well as providing thought leadership on cutting edge areas of IP. But our dream goes beyond supporting research, but helping to translate it into effective policy-making for your countries and regions, so that it has impact in the real world. I therefore encourage and urge you, as you embark on your journey as researchers, to not just be distant observers but also active participants in the development journey of your countries.

The Conference program is a rich buffet of research topics spread across many geographies and topics, with close to 200 papers being present. I hope you will also take this opportunity to network and befriend many of your fellow researchers, as this will only enrich your perspectives and lives.

Lastly, let me wish everyone a successful Conference, and to keep healthy until a time when we can all meet in person.

Thank you.