



C. PCT 1500

February 2, 2017

Madam,  
Sir,

I have great pleasure to inform you that, on February 2, 2017, the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) published the 3 millionth international application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). This is an important milestone in the history of the Treaty and of the Organization.

From modest beginnings in 1978, with initially 18 members, the PCT has grown into the central pillar of the international patent system, the primary vehicle for applicants seeking patent protection internationally in any of the PCT's current 151 Member States and one of the best examples of successful multilateral work sharing and cooperation in the field of intellectual property.

In its almost 39 years of operations, the number of international applications filed has steadily increased from 459 applications during its first year to more than 230,000 applications in 2016, far exceeding even the most optimistic expectations of the founders of the PCT who created the system in the 1960s. Today, it is one of WIPO's key assets, accounting for 76 per cent of its revenue and enabling the financing of the development cooperation program of the Organization and of many of its other activities. I have every expectation that its growth and vitality will continue. The PCT's success is a tribute to the vision of the PCT's founders who, more than four decades ago, foresaw the value in providing a global service to assist innovators in seeking multinational patent protection for their inventions.

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As we mark this occasion, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you, innovators around the globe as users of the system, representatives of PCT Member States, staff of Offices working, in various capacities, in and for the networked PCT System, and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as civil society groups, for your invaluable support and collaboration, your faith and confidence in the system, and for engaging with the International Bureau so constructively in developing the system over the years to ensure that it meets the needs of all its stakeholders. The success of the PCT would not have been possible without your unfailing support.

Building on the vision of the founders of the PCT, the system will need to further evolve so that it can continue to function as a primary tool to support innovation. It is in this context that I would like to draw your attention to a memorandum entitled “The PCT System — Overview and Possible Future Directions and Priorities”, available on the WIPO website in English only at <http://www.wipo.int/pct/en/3million/index.html>, which provides an overview of the PCT System and some of the issues which it faces. It is intended to provide “food for thought” on broad directions and priorities for future work aimed at further improving the system.

The International Bureau remains dedicated to working with all PCT stakeholders to further improve the functioning of the PCT System, for the common benefit of Member States, Offices, applicants and third parties alike.

Yours sincerely,



Francis Gurry  
Director General