The first Forum on Intellectual Property and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) of the OECD, held at WIPO in Geneva from May 20 to 23, provided a platform for participants to share policies, practices and experiences on their respective outreach and support activities concerning intellectual property for universities, entrepreneurs, industry and business. Participants from the 15 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries agreed to intensify future collaborative efforts in this area.

A number of presentations showed that, while much innovative work is being carried out by a number of IPOs, significant work remains to be done in view of the generally low level of awareness about the role and relevance of intellectual property for universities, entrepreneurs, industry and business. The presentations made during the Forum are available on the website of the SMEs Division at www.wipo.int/sme.

WIPO Deputy Director General Rita Hayes opened the Forum by highlighting the importance of SMEs to the economies of the OECD countries, and the continuing need for more effective use of the tools offered by the intellectual property system. Mrs. Hayes outlined the approach of the SMEs Division to meet the challenges of demystifying intellectual property for SMEs worldwide. In her keynote speech, WIPO Deputy Director General Philippe Petit outlined the various ways in which OECD countries contribute to, and participate in, the activities carried out by WIPO. Mr. Petit cited the opening of the WIPO coordination Office in Brussels as a sign of WIPO’s willingness to intensify relationships with OECD countries belonging, or in the process of acceding to, the European Union.

Forum participants agreed to meet at WIPO every alternate year, with the intervening periods being utilized for collaborating on various projects. It was also agreed that in the intervening years, at least one theme-based meeting will remain the principal tool for interaction among the IPOs of the OECD countries to share ideas and experiences.

Visual Creators’ Collective Management Societies

WIPO participated in the June meeting of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) committee for the visual creators’ collective management societies worldwide, which was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. The collective management of copyright faces numerous challenges due to the diversity of visual creations and the rapid expansion of the means of dissemination of such works.

Visual creations include all works such as plastic art (paintings, drawing, sculptures), graphic creations (illustrations, caricatures, animated drawings, comics, graphic designs), photography, video creations and other types of graphic creations. In Latin America, these creations constitute an enormous repertory with various applications in the cultural market as well as in the world of trademarks, graphic design and advertising. WIPO launched a pilot project in Latin America in 1999 to deal with such problems. The Latin American Council of Visual Arts was established at a meeting organized by WIPO and the Government of Cuba. It groups seven societies and works under the coordination of the Mexican collective management society.

The CISAC meeting provided useful information on current collective management issues in the 24 participating countries as well as an opportunity to build a network with partners in cooperation activities. The meeting covered a number of topics, including:

- the harmonization of the droit de suite in the European Union;
- the European directive on copyright and the information society;
- and
- the development of visual creators collective management societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The First PCT Seminar in Iran

WIPO organized the first-ever seminar on the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) and innovative and inventive activity in Tehran on June 22 and 23 in cooperation with the Registration Office for Companies and Industrial Property, the Registration Organization for Deeds and Properties and the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology. The conference attracted some 110 participants from research and development (R&D) centers, universities and the intellectual property profession as well as government officials.

In addition to topics covering features of the PCT system and its advantages, the seminar also discussed subjects such as patenting strategies, the importance of patent information in support of inventive and innovative activities, and the infrastructure and professional training needed for commercializing inventions. The participants particularly appreciated the positive experience of India with the PCT system and Indian efforts to modernize patent legislation and administration. The Iranian R&D organizations expressed interest in learning from the experience of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of India, which has in recent years developed a substantial portfolio of patents and emerged as the top user of the PCT from developing countries in 2002.

IP Cooperation with OECD Countries

The first Forum on Intellectual Property and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) of the OECD, held at WIPO in Geneva from May 20 to 23, provided a platform for participants to share policies, practices and experiences on their respective outreach and support activities concerning intellectual property for universities, entrepreneurs, industry and business. Participants from the 15 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries agreed to intensify future collaborative efforts in this area.

A number of presentations showed that, while much innovative work is being carried out by a number of IPOs, significant work remains to be done in view of the generally low level of awareness about the role and relevance of the intellectual property system for enterprise competitiveness in OECD countries and the world. The presentations made during the Forum are available on the website of the SMEs Division at www.wipo.int/sme.

WIPO Deputy Director General Rita Hayes opened the Forum by highlighting the importance of SMEs to the economies of the OECD countries, and the continuing need for more effective use of the tools offered by the intellectual property system. Mrs. Hayes outlined the approach of the SMEs Division to meet the challenges of demystifying intellectual property for SMEs worldwide. In his keynote speech, WIPO Deputy Director General Philippe Petit outlined the various ways in which OECD countries contribute to, and participate in, the activities carried out by WIPO. Mr. Petit cited the opening of the WIPO coordination Office in Brussels as a sign of WIPO’s willingness to intensify relationships with OECD countries belonging, or in the process of acceding to, the European Union.

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