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Visits

WIPO and Australia: Closer Cooperation

WIPO and the government of Australia will work hand-in-hand to promote the protection of intellectual property in the Asia-Pacific region. An agreement to this effect was signed during a visit by WIPO Director General, Dr. Kamil Idris, to Australia on March 6 and 7, 2000.

A joint statement of cooperation was signed by Dr. Idris and Senator Nick Minchin, Minister for Industry, Science and Resources, Senator Richard Alston, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and Mr. Daryl Williams, the Attorney General. The agreement pledges to build on the existing fruitful relationship between WIPO and the Australian government and to reinforce joint efforts to develop effective intellectual property systems in the region.

Dr. Idris welcomed the signing of the agreement and expressed recognition for the important role that Australia plays in promoting respect for intellectual property rights both region-wide and throughout the world. "We are very pleased with the Australian government's commitment to continue working closely with WIPO to develop strong intellectual property regimes in the region,"



Photo: Australian Tourist Commission

Dr. Idris said. "This is the best guarantee that Australia's creative talent will be rewarded and recognized throughout the world," he added.

The Australian government also expressed its satisfaction with the agreement and its close ties with WIPO. A statement in this respect was issued by the Office of Senator Minchin.

During his two-day visit to Australia, the Director General held a series of meetings with ministers, parliamentarians, high-level

officials, representatives of indigenous groups and lawyers. In addition, the Director General opened a WIPO-IP Australia Regional Symposium in Sydney, which included some 100 representatives from 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In his opening statement, Dr. Idris highlighted the growing importance of intellectual property in today's knowledge-based societies and its key role in promoting economic, social and cultural development.

He also met with with representatives of indigenous

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peoples. He listened carefully to their concerns and explained that WIPO is an inter-governmental organization that acts on issues when governments bring them to the attention of the Organization. Australia is a country with a rich cultural and indigenous heritage. The Director General reviewed the work being done by WIPO to explore the relevance of the intellectual property system to the protection of indigenous and traditional knowledge, which so far has largely been of a fact-finding nature.

In a meeting with some 150 lawyers, Dr. Idris responded to questions about the work that WIPO is doing at an international level to promote the protection of intellectual property. Questions covered issues ranging from the progressive development of international intellectual property laws to dispute settlement activities, in particular relating to the resolution of domain name disputes.

Director General Pledges WIPO Support to Mexico

The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr. Kamil Idris, presented in February medals to three Mexican inventors in recognition of their outstanding inventions. The award ceremony was part of an official visit by Dr. Idris to Mexico City, where he met top officials and representatives of the private sector, as well as academia and pledged WIPO's continued support to Mexico in modernizing its intellectual property infrastructure.

At a gathering held at the Ministry of Trade and Industry where there were some 200 participants, the Director General highlighted the growing importance of intellectual property in the knowledge-based economies of today. "The society of the 21st century is a knowledge-based society in which wealth creation is no longer based on bricks and mortar...knowledge and

information have already emerged as key factors of production and will soon rival the classical components of the economy...land, labor and capital," he said. Dr. Idris underlined that "Today, intellectual property must be understood as a tool of economic growth and economic development, as a tool for wealth creation." He emphasized the importance of intellectual property in promoting social, cultural and economic development. "Intellectual property rights are the source of human existence and co-existence. They are foreign to no culture and native to all nations."

During the visit, the Director General signed a cooperation agreement with the Minister for Trade and Industry and the head of the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI). As a result of the Agreement, WIPO will provide



Dr. Kamil Idris discusses WIPO-Mexico cooperation with Minister Hector Valezzi, Director General of International Specialized Organizations of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Crisoforo Peralta, Director General of the National Institute of Copyright.



Photo: IMPI

WIPO and Mexican officials discuss cooperation agreement between IMPI and WIPO.

assistance in strengthening the legal framework for the protection of intellectual property in Mexico, human resources training, and strategic planning. The Agreement also calls for technical cooperation in the automation of industrial property information services as well as for the promotion of the corporate image of IMPI.

Dr. Idris honored three Mexican inventors by conferring upon them WIPO Gold Medals. "The WIPO Gold Medal Award... aims at stimulating invention and innovation around the world. The objective is to improve the image of inventors through recognition of their merits as creators of substantive input to national wealth and development especially in developing countries," he said.

The medals were presented to Mr. Juan Celada Salmón, Mr. Luis Rafael Herrera Estrella and to the late Mr. Guillermo González Camerena "for their great contribution to the development of technology with a strong impact in three very important areas of human activity-media and communication, heavy industry and agriculture", respectively.

In his talks with Mexican officials, the Director General praised Mexico's efforts to modernize its intellectual property system and enhance the protection of

intellectual property throughout the country. Dr. Idris also pledged WIPO's continued commitment to support Mexico in its modernization efforts in the field of intellectual property. Mexican officials praised WIPO's vision and reaffirmed their support to Dr. Idris' leadership in strengthening the Organization to effectively respond to the new international scenario.

Dr. Idris welcomed Mexico's recent decision to ratify the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT), which ensures copyright protection when works are disseminated through new technologies and communication systems such as the Internet. The decision to ratify the WCT was taken by the Senate and published in the official Gazette on March 1, 2000. The next step is for Mexico to deposit its instrument of ratification with the Director General of WIPO.

WIPO is also providing expert advice to the National Institute of Copyright (INDA) in the context of a Nationally Focused Action Plan (NFAP) in the area of copyright. The NFAP will assist in modernizing the technical and administrative infrastructure of INDA. Training will also be provided as well as help in promoting awareness of the importance of intellectual property protection.

IMPI

Multilingualism: WIPO Internet Site Awarded First Prize

www.wipo.int

The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr. Kamil Idris, thanked the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) for having awarded to WIPO the first prize in the *Toile du Plurilinguisme* competition recently established by OIF to reward the best multilingual Internet sites. It is the first time that this award has been given. In 1999, the site received about 17 million hits or about 327,000 hits per week.

“WIPO’s efforts towards a dialogue with all cultures and the dissemination of information and knowledge on intellectual property through the WIPO Internet site have been honored by this award,” Dr. Idris said. He added “the prize is an encouragement for us to increase our efforts and to further expand our Internet site to best serve the largest number of Internet users throughout the world”. The site is in three languages, English, French and Spanish. In April, it also became accessible in Arabic.

The trophy was awarded to WIPO on March 20 in Geneva on the occasion of the *Journée de la Francophonie* (Day of French-speaking Countries).

For its inaugural 2000 edition, the jury of the *Toile du Plurilinguisme* was composed of representatives from diplomatic circles, the media and academia. It sought to select the Internet site of an intergovernmental organization



Photo: Mercedes Martinez

demonstrating, both in content and design, appreciation for the plurality of languages and cultures. Selection was based on the following criteria:

Quantitative criteria

- number of languages in which substantial content existed
- parity between the volume of information available in each language

- parity between the updating time for content in each language
- volume of the content

Qualitative criteria

- quality of the languages used (lexicology, terminology, syntax)
- originality of the text: the existence of original, untranslated texts
- aesthetic value of the site taking into account the requirements of fast loading and the clear layout of texts.

Technical criteria

- tree structure: the ease of locating and accessing the information sought
- formatting of contents and the ease of use of navigation tools (downloading of texts, access to e-mail, etc.)
- independent operation of the site with relation to the constraints of navigational tools (example: Acrobat Reader).

Traditional Knowledge Tops Agenda in Talks with Colombian Vice President

Talks on the importance of traditional knowledge and biodiversity to developing countries topped the agenda of a meeting in late March between the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Dr. Kamil Idris, and the Vice-President of Colombia, Mr. Gustavo Bell Lemus. During the meeting, Dr. Idris also praised Colombia for its efforts to modernize its intellectual property system.

Mr. Bell expressed support for WIPO's program of activities, particularly its technical cooperation activities and capacity building in developing countries through the WIPO Academy.

The Vice President welcomed WIPO's work in the area of traditional knowledge, which has so far sought to study the link between the intellectual property system and traditional knowledge. Mr. Bell called on WIPO to further develop these efforts bearing in mind the significance of traditional knowledge to developing countries.

Underlining the economic, social and cultural importance of traditional knowledge for developing countries, Mr. Bell pointed out the potential adverse effects of globalization on cultural manifestations. He noted that globalization has a tendency to standardize culture. He said that WIPO should remain at the heart of these discussions and take the lead in ensuring that traditional knowledge is covered by intellectual property protection. Dr. Idris welcomed the Vice President's confidence in WIPO as the appropriate forum for these



Photo: Museum of Ethnography, Geneva

"Man of Santa Marta", black terra cotta, Tairona Culture (1360-1600 A.D.), Columbia.

talks and acknowledged the importance and relevance of traditional knowledge for all communities.

During the talks, it was pointed out that traditional knowledge is disseminated without protection, whereas the classical intellectual property system ensures protection of knowledge before dissemination. They agreed that this discrepancy needs to be addressed. It was also emphasised that the question of traditional knowledge should not be viewed as a North-South issue.

With respect to another concern, the Vice-President stressed the importance of protecting the biodiversity

of countries in the Amazon region. Mr. Bell said this was directly related to the economic development and stability of these countries. The Colombian official also asked WIPO to continue its work with respect to the link between biodiversity and intellectual property and to provide a forum for further discussion. WIPO, he noted, should conduct research in this area to obtain a better and more comprehensive understanding of the complexity and implications of the issue.

Russian Agency for Patents & Trademarks (ROSPATENT) Reinstated

The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) welcomed the reinstatement of the Russian Agency for Patents and Trademarks (ROSPATENT) as a federal executive authority of the Russian Federation. Dr. Idris was informed of this important new development at a meeting in Geneva by Dr. Alexander D. Korchagin, Director General of Rospatent, who was accompanied by Mr. Alexander Bavykin, Deputy Director, Legal Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

“We are delighted with this development which signals a new era for intellectual property protection within the Russian Federation” Dr. Idris said. The legal status of Rospatent was restored by decree of Acting President Vladimir Putin on February 29, 2000. Under the terms of the decree, the Russian Agency will be responsible for all aspects of intellectual property protection, including copyright and related rights. “These measures, including the formalization of copyright arrangements, are a clear and important reflection of the Russian Government’s commitment to enhancing, upgrading and strengthening its intellectual property infrastructure” the Director General said.

In the course of their meeting, the Directors General discussed a number of bilateral matters, including the provision of legal and technical assistance within the framework of a program of



cooperation between the Russian Federation and WIPO. Practical arrangements for the organization of the Moscow Forum in June 2000 were also discussed. This forum will provide training in intellectual property for developing countries and countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

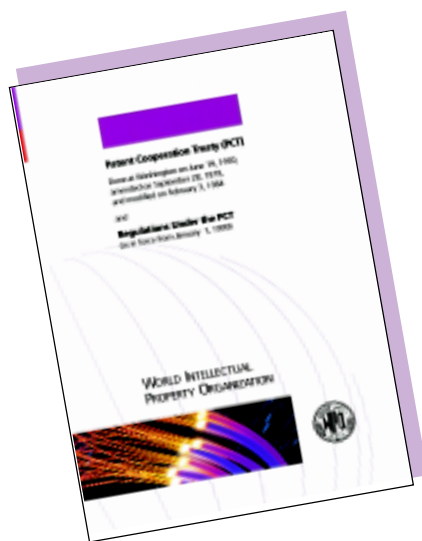
ROSPATENT

PCT Applications: Simpler Procedures

Member countries of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) adopted measures in March to simplify the national phase processing of PCT applications. Progress was also made in discussing a number of aspects of the electronic filing of international applications under the PCT.

Meeting as the PCT Assembly, delegates from 90 PCT member countries considered proposed amendments to the PCT Regulations in so far as they relate to the proposed Patent Law Treaty (PLT). The proposed PLT is expected to be established at a Diplomatic Conference in May this year.

Currently, when an international application reaches the national phase before the various designated offices under the PCT, a number of different national requirements must be complied with. The newly adopted PCT Regulations will allow applicants, when filing their international applications, to complete standard declarations



concerning certain matters on which documents or evidence are required in the national phase, such as the identity of the inventor and the right to apply for and be granted a patent. The declarations will then be forwarded by WIPO to the designated offices concerned. The circumstances in which further documents and evidence can be

required by designated offices will be restricted to cases where the offices may reasonably doubt the veracity of the declarations. These amendments will benefit PCT applicants by streamlining and simplifying procedural aspects of the filing and processing of national and regional patent applications. The amendments will become applicable on March 1, 2001.

Consultations took place with interested offices about proposed modifications of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT relating to the implementation of electronic filing and processing of PCT applications in the context of the PCT Automation (IMPACT) Project. As a result, the issues and the direction for this important aspect of the project were clarified. The draft legal framework for electronic filing will be revised for discussion at a PCT consultation meeting with patent offices and user representatives, scheduled to be held in Geneva in July this year.

PCT Benefits to African Countries Top Agenda of Seminar

Representatives from Africa's French-speaking countries took part in a seminar organized by WIPO in Nouakchott, Mauritania from March 22-23, 2000 on the potential benefits of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). Thirty-two government participants included nationals from the OAPI countries, as well as Burundi, Madagascar, and Rwanda. An additional 50 representatives from industry, research institutes, academia and chambers of commerce also took part.

The seminar was opened by Mrs. Lalle Meriem Mint Moualye Idriss, Secretary General of the Ministry of Mines and Industry, who



WIPO Deputy Director General François Curchod (second from left) with participants at PCT regional seminar.

Photo: Ministry of Mines and Industry, Mauritania

emphasized the strong link between technological progress and economic and social development. Mr. François Curchod, WIPO

Deputy Director General, also addressed the participants at the opening ceremony.

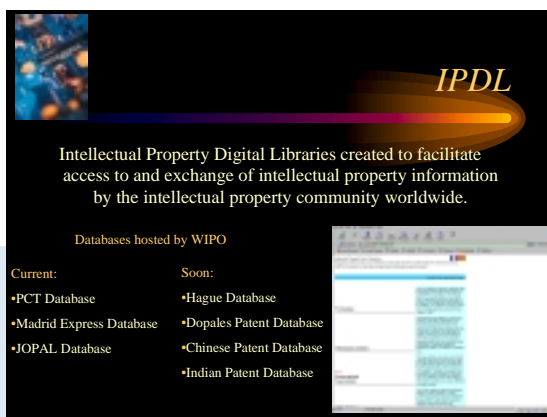
During the two-day meeting, Mr. Curchod also chaired a round table discussion at which participants exchanged information, views and experiences on specific issues relating to the PCT, the WIPO-administered international filing system that facilitates patent protection in multiple countries.

Intellectual Property Digital Library (IPDL)

WIPO took part in a constructive exchange of views with representatives of leading European industries, as well as the French Industrial Property Office (INPI), European Patent Office (EPO), and Derwent, in the area of patent documentation. The 39th meeting of the PDG (Patent Documentation Group) Working Group IMPACT on Patent Laws and Documentation was held in Marl, Germany in late March.

The PDG, which was founded in 1957, represents the interests in patent documentation of almost 40 large European companies. The companies are active mainly in the chemical, petroleum and electronics fields.

Among the issues addressed during the two day meeting was WIPO's Intellectual Property Digital Library (IPDL) Program. The IPDL includes publication through the Internet of intellectual property information resources, such as patent information, to facilitate the transfer of technology. Access to intellectual property digital libraries (IPDLs) via WIPONET has the potential to greatly facilitate access to and exchange of intellectual property information by the intellectual property community worldwide. IPDLs, administered by intellectual property offices of member States, provide timely access to complete collections of intellectual property records in electronic format. Such access by developing countries will be an invaluable tool for technology transfer and economic development benefiting inventors, industry, universities and research and development institutions of those countries.



The first steps in the establishment of an IPDL at WIPO (the WIPO IPDL) were taken with the introduction of an operational PCT Service in April 1998. The WIPO IPDL currently provides Internet access to a range of searchable database collections, including data relating to international applications filed under the PCT, the Madrid system for the registration of marks, and the Hague system for the deposit of industrial designs. Access to the database collections of Madrid and PCT is available to the general public free-of-charge. Collections are updated on a daily and weekly basis respectively. Steady increases in the use of these systems are testimony to their relevance and value to users.

Through a common search interface, the IPDL is equipped with a number of features which allow users to conduct extensive data searches, including multilingual support, the ability to select a range of presentational formats and display options, and facilities to maintain a history of search queries. The content of the WIPO IPDL databases is being developed incrementally and will, in the

future, include the full text of international applications filed under the PCT and the inclusion of intellectual property collections hosted on behalf of member States participating in the project. The implementation of WIPONET and with it the provision of secure information exchange (globally secure network) would provide the framework for the development of a global IPDL administered via the Internet that would draw on the IPDL collections maintained in the various intellectual property offices worldwide. Plans and studies towards the realization of such a goal will be initiated in the coming year.

Mr. William Guy, Head of WIPO's Special Projects Section, presented the project to the PDG. He focused on background to WIPO's IPDL program and examples of IPDL developments in WIPO and other offices. Discussions focused on the possible level of participation by the user (industry) community. WIPO welcomed user input in the future but stressed that the first priority was a determination of the needs of national intellectual property offices.

Future of International Patent Classification in the Digital Age

Experts from WIPO member countries approved in March a strategic plan that charts the future development of the international patent classification system in the digital era. The Committee of Experts of the International Patent Classification Union agreed on a series of measures ensuring that the IPC remains relevant to its users and makes it more accessible as a global information tool. The creation of a master database to facilitate access to information about patents was also endorsed.

The International Patent Classification (IPC) system is a hierarchical system by which the information in patent documents is divided and subdivided into a range of sections, classes, subclasses and groups (main groups and subgroups). This system is an indispensable tool for the retrieval of patent documents in the search for "prior art" to establish the novelty and inventive step of an invention. Such information is required by patent-issuing offices, potential inventors, research and development units, and others concerned with the application or development of technology.

The IPC is updated regularly to ensure that it remains a relevant and useful information tool. The current reform process was initiated by WIPO in 1999 to ensure that the IPC is equipped to meet the challenges of the digital age. It is anticipated that current efforts will result in the conversion of the IPC into an information resource that will feed into a worldwide patent information system and serve the needs of all industrial property offices and the general public. Under the strategic plan approved during the meeting,



the architecture of the reformed IPC will consist of a two level structure. The core level will serve the patent information needs of small patent offices, especially in developing countries, and the general public. The advanced level is designed to accommodate the information needs of large patent offices, such as those that act as International Searching Authorities (ISAs) under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

The Committee also approved the creation of the Master Classification Database. This information tool, one of the pillars of the reformed IPC, will include classification data relating to the world's patent documents and patent-related technical literature. This major development will be a key component of intellectual property digital libraries and will provide broad-based access to a comprehensive source of information about inventions throughout the world.

Measures designed to make the IPC a more user-friendly patent informa-

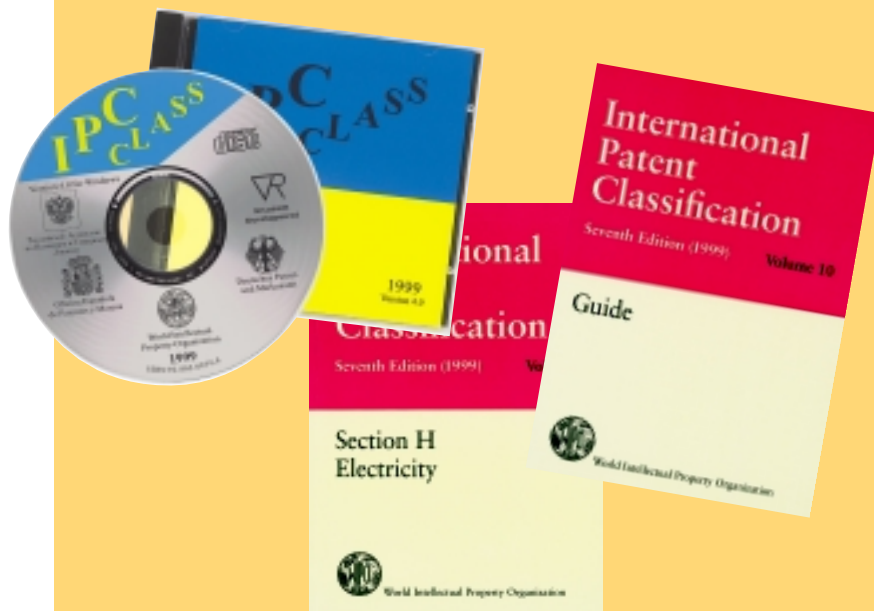
tion tool, particularly for non-professionals, were also approved by the Committee. To ensure consistent global application, electronic data images will be introduced to illustrate the contents of the IPC. This data will also provide definitions and explanations of classification groups, technical terms and expressions, including chemical formulae.

Following a detailed discussion of the status of IPC reform, the Committee established the reform program for the current year which includes a broad range of activities, including revision of IPC policy and procedure, cooperation between industrial property offices in relation to the reclassification of collections of patent information, simplification of IPC rules and provision of modern information technology tools to support training in the use of the IPC. Progress in the implementation of this reform program will be reviewed by the Committee at its next session in February 2001.

The International Patent Classification (IPC)

The International Patent Classification (IPC) is based on the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification, a WIPO-administered international treaty which was concluded in 1971 and entered into force in 1975. The Agreement is open to states party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. On January 1, 2000, 45 countries were party to this multilateral agreement. However, the industrial property offices of more than 90 countries, four regional offices and the WIPO secretariat under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) actually use the IPC.

The seventh edition of the IPC, which came into force on January 1, 2000, consists of 8 sections, 120 classes, 628 subclasses and approximately 69,000 groups. Each subdivision is attributed a symbol consisting of Arabic numerals and letters of the Latin alphabet. The appropriate IPC symbols are indicated on each patent document (published patent applications and granted patents), of which about 1,000,000 were issued each year in the last 10 years. The IPC symbols are allotted by the national or regional industrial property office that publishes the patent document. In order to keep the IPC up to date, it is continuously revised and a new edition is published every five years.



Cooperation for Development

WIPO Asian Regional Workshop on the Benefits of Global Industrial Property Protection Systems

A wide range of professionals and officials from 23 countries in the Asia and Pacific region took part in a WIPO-organized workshop in Singapore from February 14-16, 2000 to focus on the advantages of WIPO-administered treaties that facilitate international intellectual property protection. The workshop focused on the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), the Madrid system for the international registration of marks, and the Hague system for the international deposit of industrial designs.

The workshop, financed by Japanese funds-in-trust, was inaugurated by Singapore's Minister of State for Law and Home Affairs, Professor Ho Peng

Kee, who reviewed his country's three-pronged approach to intellectual property rights - constant revision of laws and procedures to ensure relevance, sweeping public awareness campaigns and effective enforcement activities.

Presentations focused on practical tips for users to reap maximum benefit from the international global protection systems. Several speakers addressed their country's own experiences. These included representatives from Singapore and the Republic of Korea who spoke about their countries' experience with the PCT. As tangible proof of the benefits of the global systems, it was observed that since joining the

PCT in 1995, Singapore had registered a 50% increase in international filings.

The workshop helped clarify the opportunities and advantages that membership of the global protection systems could potentially provide for developing countries. The workshop was enriched by the contribution of nine experienced guest speakers who spoke about the positive role and impact of effective intellectual property protection in boosting a country's economic and technological development. Concrete examples were provided by citing the success stories of China, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Japan.

Intellectual Property Workshop for Legislative Draftsmen from African Countries

The island country of Mauritius was host to a WIPO workshop for legislative draftsmen from African countries from February 28 to March 3, 2000. The workshop aimed at familiarizing participants with the basic principles of intellectual property law and procedure. It also focused on international obligations in respect of the laws, particularly those arising from treaties administered by WIPO and the Agreement on the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Modern trends in the fields of copyright and related rights and industrial property were also reviewed.



Participants at the regional WIPO workshop for legislative draftsmen in Mauritius.

Participants found the workshop useful in clarifying the various issues discussed and placed them in a better position for carrying out their work in preparing legislation for compliance with obligations relating to TRIPS and the WIPO Internet treaties. The clarifications regarding assistance available from WIPO with regard to legislation was much appreciated by the participants. The event was characterized by active discussions on such issues as international treaty obligations, use of protected works on the Internet and in advertisements, moral rights and economic rights, common law and civil law systems, protection of folklore, non-voluntary licenses, transmission of works via the Internet, unfair competition and anti-trust laws.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Harry Ganoo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Seminar on Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights in Prague



Old Town Hall and the astronomical clock, Prague.

A meeting focusing on the enforcement of intellectual property rights was held at the end of March in Prague at the Czech Industrial Property Office. Some 30 local participants and about 20 representatives from five countries in Central and Eastern Europe took part in the seminar, which was opened by Mr. Karel Èada, President of the Czech Industrial Property Office.

Presentations covered the role of the judiciary in the enforcement of intellectual property rights. The Czech experience was evoked. Issues relating to customs and enforcement were also discussed. Several industry representatives also presented enforcement issues relating to trademark counterfeiting.

The question of copyright piracy and the role of enforcement were also reviewed. The participants also heard presentations regarding enforcement issues relating to the Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

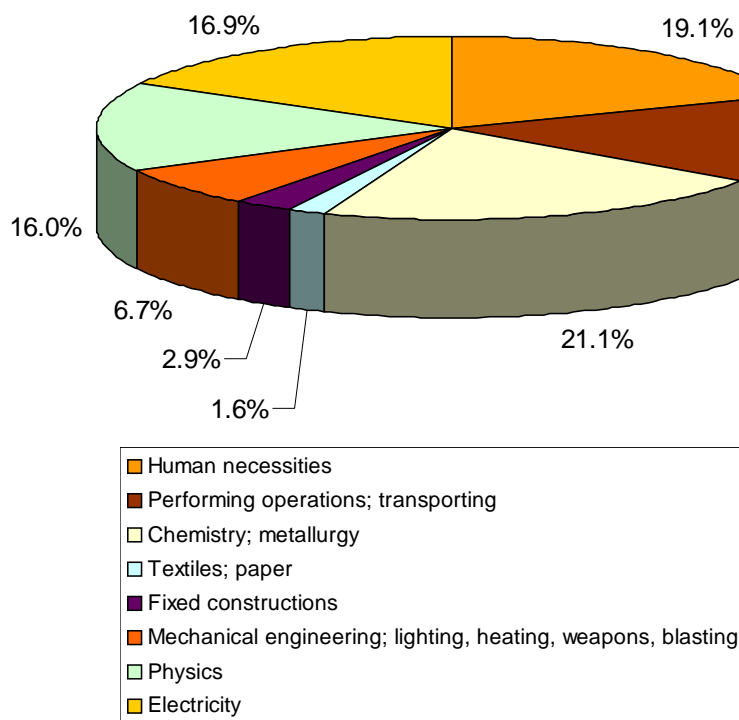
Discussions on a number of WIPO's cooperation for development activities with Central and Eastern European countries were held on the sidelines of the seminar. In addition to the local participants, nationals from Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, took part in the two-day seminar, which was jointly organized by WIPO and the Czech authorities.

Record Number of PCT filings in 1999

WIPO received a record number of applications in 1999 under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), a global system designed to facilitate the process of obtaining patent protection in any or all of its 108 member states. Just over 74,000 international applications, representing the notional equivalent of some 5.8 million national patent applications, were filed in 1999—a 10.5% increase on the previous year's performance. Those 74,023 applications have such a broad potential effect because when filing an international application, a PCT applicant designates those states in which protection is sought. Prospects for future growth are also promising in the light of recent fee reductions and ongoing efforts to make the use of the PCT increasingly safe, easy and efficient (notably through use of information technology) for patent applicants and national patent Offices.

Welcoming this positive trend, WIPO Director General Dr. Kamil Idris said the "continued vigorous growth in the use of the PCT mechanism in 1999 is a strong indication of the value and usefulness of this service to the private sector. The PCT offers applicants a truly cost-effective and simple business solution to obtaining protection for their inventions in multiple countries."

Applicants from industrialized countries continued to be the main users of the PCT, although statistics show positive growth in the use of the system by an increasing number of users in developing countries. Inventors and industry in the United States were the biggest users of the PCT in 1999, with 39.8% of all applications, followed by Germany



PCT applications published in 1999: breakdown according to the main technical fields under the IPC

(14.7%), Japan (9.8%), the United Kingdom (6.4%) and France (4.9%), mirroring the 1998 trend.

The ten developing countries in which the highest number of international applications was filed in 1999 were the Republic of Korea, South Africa, China, Singapore, Brazil, India, Mexico, Barbados, Cuba, and Indonesia. A total of 1,745 international applications were filed by inventors and industry in developing countries in 1999 which compared very favorably with 1998.

In 1999, WIPO continued to promote accession to the PCT and to raise awareness of the benefits of the system to inventors from developing countries and economies in transition. "We still

have much work to do to promote widespread accession and use of the PCT by developing countries" Dr. Idris said, "we are, however, greatly encouraged by the fact that a larger number of developing countries used the system in 1999."

In 1999 a further six countries—all developing nations—joined the PCT, namely, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Costa Rica, Dominica, the United Republic of Tanzania and Morocco. Two additional States, Algeria and Antigua and Barbuda also joined the PCT in December 1999 but will not be bound by the Treaty until March 2000.

By filing only one international application, the PCT user can obtain the effect of regular national

patent applications in any or all of the States that have joined the PCT without initially having to furnish a translation of the application in the local language or pay national fees. The national patent granting procedure and the related costs are postponed, in the majority of cases by up to 18 months (or even longer in the case of some Offices). The PCT system offers to patent applicants a user-friendly and cost-effective route for filing their patent applications in many countries.

Breakdown According to IPC Categories

Below is the breakdown of PCT applications according to the subject matter categories listed in the International Patent Classification (IPC), a worldwide patent classification system for technology fields.

Chemistry; metallurgy	21.1%
Human necessities	19.1%
Electricity	16.9%
Physics	16.0%
Performing operations; transporting	15.7%
Mechanical engineering; lighting; heating; weapons; blasting	6.7%
Fixed constructions	2.9%
Textiles; paper 1.	6%

For further information on the IPC, please refer to:
<http://classifications.wipo.int>

Fee Reductions

In 1999, member States decided to further cut PCT fees by an average of 13 per cent, effective January 1, 2000. The cumulative effect of this measure (including two earlier PCT fee reductions in 1998 and 1999) means a 29.2 per cent reduction in the cost of PCT filings.

International Trademark System: 1999 Trends

The Madrid system for the international registration of marks, which is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), continued to consolidate its position during 1999. The year was marked by several new treaty accessions, a small growth in the number of international registrations and accelerated use of new technology to make the system more efficient and beneficial to users.

Trends in 1999

At the end of 1999, 64 States were members of the Madrid Union, of which 51 were party to the Agreement and 43 were party to the Protocol. This is a particularly marked growth in the case of the Protocol, which had just nine member countries when it came into operation on April 1, 1996. Of particular significance is the accession on December 14, 1999, by Japan. Not only does this mean that Japanese trademark owners will be able to benefit from the Madrid system and that trademark owners in other Madrid Union countries will be able to use the system to obtain protection in one of the world's largest economies; it is also likely to have a considerable effect in prompting accession to the Madrid Protocol by other countries, particularly of the Asian and Pacific region.

The number of international registrations effected in 1999 shows a slight rise over the figure for 1998 (20,072 as compared with 20,020). This is nonetheless a good result when it is borne in mind that the Madrid system has traditionally been used mainly by trademark owners in member states of the European Union to obtain protec-

tion in each other's territory and, since 1996, it has operated alongside the European Community system. It had been predicted that the coming into being of the Community system would cause a pronounced fall in the number of international registrations. In fact, although the use of the Community system has exceeded all expectations, the international system has continued to prosper and the number of registrations in 1999 was 6.5% higher than in 1995, before the start-up of the Community system.

The international registrations of 20,072 in 1999 had an average of 12 countries covered per registration. This means that the activity in the Madrid system in 1999 was equivalent to over 240,000 national trademark registrations.

The International Trademark Registry is operating in a fully automated and paperless environment. Further steps were taken in 1999 to update this system and make it even more efficient. From the beginning of 1999, the *WIPO Gazette of International Marks* has been published on CD-ROM. This has considerable advantages over the paper version (which continues to be available) as regards storage and postage costs; even more important, it is now in a form which is readily searchable by users. Also in 1999, WIPO introduced *Madrid Express*, the publication on its website of information concerning international registrations that have not yet been published in the Gazette. This information is available, in searchable form, within three days of the receipt by WIPO of the relevant document.

Calendar of Meetings

May 11 to June 2 (CICG¹, Geneva) Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of the Patent Law Treaty

The Diplomatic Conference will consider the adoption of 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.

July 4 to 6 (Geneva) Working Group on Constitutional Reform (Second session)

The Working Group will continue its work based on the results of its first session (March 22 to 24, 2000).

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

July 10 to 13 (Geneva) Working Group on the Modification of the Regulations Under the Lisbon Agreement (First session)

The Working Group will be presented with a study identifying provisions in the Regulations Under the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and Their International Registration that could be improved in the light of experience acquired with the implementation of the said Agreement.

Invitations: As members, the members of the Lisbon Union; as observers, the States members of the Paris Union that are not members of the Lisbon Union, and certain organizations.

July 10 to 14 (Geneva) Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) (Fifth Plenary session)

The Committee will discuss, among other issues, project management methodologies to be implemented by WIPO and planning mechanisms relating to the Information Technology Strategic Implementation Plan. (During the same week, a PCT informal consultation meeting will be held to discuss electronic filing of PCT international applications.)

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

Products

The following new products were issued by WIPO:

- *Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights* (English) No. L450CM(E), (Arabic) No. L450CM(A), Free of charge
- *Commerce Électronique et Propriété Intellectuelle* (French) No. L481(F), Free of charge
- *Comercio Electrónico y Propiedad Intelectual* (Spanish) No. L481(S), Free of charge



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Prices do not cover surface mail. Bank transfers should be made to WIPO account No. 487080-81, at the Swiss Credit Bank, 1211 Geneva 70, Switzerland.

Correction



The traditional textiles shown at left were misidentified in the January, 1999 issue of the Magazine. They are fine examples of art from the Kuna community in Panama, including the famous *molás*. The WIPO Magazine regrets the error. The Editor