



GENERAL STATEMENT

by

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Commissioner

Korean Intellectual Property Office

Republic of Korea

On the Occasion

of

the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO

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Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your election as chair of the fifty-first Series of Meetings of the Member States of WIPO. I believe this year's series of meetings will lead to fruitful outcomes under your able leadership.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, I would like to acclaim the successful outcomes of all the WIPO projects promoted over the past twelve months. I would also like to express my special thanks to Director General Dr. Francis Gurry and the WIPO Secretariat for their unsparing efforts in preparing and arranging this year's series of meetings.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

Facing the twin difficulties of low employment and stalled economic growth, combined with widespread uncertainty in the global economy, the Republic of Korea has recently adopted as a core national agenda "the transformation into the creative economy," which aims to build up the economic environment such that creativity and innovation will be easily realized in the market, facilitating quick start-ups and creating new markets and jobs in the end.

As an enabling policy tool centered on such an economic paradigm shift, we endeavor to reinforce the IP ecosystem to accelerate a value chain from idea to business activities.

Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), in this respect, has changed its examination paradigm, focusing on enhancing examination quality and shortening pendency periods.

To facilitate the creation of high-quality IPRs, we endeavor to raise the overall quality of each IPR administration process, from the application stage through examination to registration. Specifically, KIPO has been equipped with a smart search system, strengthened the dialogue with applicants, and simplified correction procedures.

In terms of pendency periods, we have established a mid-term plan to shorten examination pendency periods by 2015, to 10 months for patents, and 3 months for trademarks. To achieve these targets, we plan to not only build up the examination capacity, including the recruit of examiners, the enhancement of IP training, and the improvement of the patent system, but also expand the participation in work-sharing programs such as the IP5 framework, PPH and Collaborative Search and Examination under the PCT.

In the meantime, to strengthen the commercialization of IP rights and foster quick start-ups with ideas, the Republic of Korea has been implementing an IP finance support system to ease financing for companies in possession of outstanding IPRs.

Recognizing that a commercialization issue is common to all member states, I suggest member states to join forces to work out a feasible method of IP evaluation that would also precede the activation of IP financing.

In the field of Copyright regime, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has put its utmost efforts in balancing the protection, and the promotion, of copyright. As one of the major driving forces for the transforming into the creative economy and creative industry, copyright has performed a critical role in creating and utilizing culture-related contents.

Let me turn to the affairs around WIPO.

In the area of international norm-setting, we have recently noticed a remarkable advance in the copyright field, in particular, with the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty in June of this year, following the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances last June. As the first treaty on exceptions and limitations in the history of the IP system, the Marrakesh Treaty is expected to become a new trigger in balancing between the protection, and the promotion, of copyright.

I wish for this spirit of compromise and cooperation, learned through those exercises, to carry over into discussions in the industrial property regime such as those currently taking place on the Design Law Treaty (DLT) and, especially, the Substantive Patent Law Treaty (SPLT), which remains in a stalemate despite its huge benefits to be enjoyed by industries.

Secondly, with regard to global IP services provided by WIPO, I would like to stress out that all policy and justification thereof shall come from their users. As a member state, we are always here to stand for our users in Korea and convey their voice. In a way, it is time for WIPO to seek a comprehensive mechanism to engage user groups in policy formulation on global IP service.

There is no doubt that it is important to meet the needs and expectations of customers. In this respect, the role of WIPO's external offices is increasingly important to build closer relations, and communicate effectively, with service users.

WIPO is, now, in the middle of strengthening the role and function of external offices, which serve as the first line in its customer support. We are of the view that External offices should not just be considered as a focal point for customer relation and inter-office cooperation, but also as providers of localized services for users. In this view, external offices should be designed and established based on whether they can perform such important functions.

In this regard, we share the view that the issue of opening new external offices, which was already touched upon under the SRP program is critically important to all member states. As explained on multiple occasions, our delegation have a strong interest in this matter as we are ready and willing to make further contributions in this regard. We hope that this issue will be addressed in an appropriate, constructive and forward-looking manner this week.

Last but not least, to bridge IP divide among member states, I would like to reassure you that the Republic of Korea has been and will remain in sincere support of, and constructive engagement toward, the implementation of Development Agenda.

Since 2004, the Republic of Korea has been conducting various activities and projects under the Korea Funds-In-Trust at WIPO to complement WIPO's efforts in this direction, including annual appropriate technology competitions and an educational animation for children, named IP 'Getting creative with Pororo: The Little Penguin,' which was jointly produced and launched last year by KIPO and WIPO.

KIPO has also proposed quite a few projects to enrich development agenda activities; namely, dissemination of appropriate technology and brand development for local business, which has been initiated since 2010, and new proposal for development of product designs and strategic design management still waiting for approval by the Committee on Development and IP.

In addition, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism recently decided to expand its annual contribution to the Funds-In-Trust for the fiscal year of 2014/2015 from around 340,000 swiss francs to approximately 470,000 swiss francs. This indicates the Ministry's sincere attention to the implementation of Development Agenda.

We continue to share, through WIPO and by bilateral cooperation as well, our lessons learned in the process of IP promotion as well as building up our economy.

Madam Chair and distinguished delegates:

The global environment is constantly changing and the IP field is always facing new challenges and issues in an age of increasing uncertainty.

However, it is clear to see that the international IP community has been successful in developing and harmonizing international IP systems through cooperation.

I hope that WIPO will play a more active role in harmonizing international IP systems, developing the IP systems of developing countries and striving for increased customer satisfaction. Hopefully, all member states will then be able to enjoy the benefits of a developed IP system for their own national development.

I assure you that the Republic of Korea, as a WIPO member state, is eager to give its full support to WIPO by faithfully fulfilling its responsibilities and commitments and by collaborating with all of the member states gathered here today.

Thank you.

[End of Statement]