

Remarks by WIPO Director General Daren Tang to the International Chamber of Commerce IP Commission, November 16, 2020.

Thank you so much and good morning, good afternoon and good evening to all the people on this call, to members of the IP Commission and to members of the ICC. Thank you to Mr. John Denton, Secretary General of the ICC as well to Ingrid Baele, Chair of the ICC IP Commission for inviting me to this ICC Commission meeting on IP.

It is my real pleasure to address all of you and for the first time in my role as WIPO DG. I see some old friends already on this call, and so it's a pleasure also to say hello to them and of course to reach out to many of you as we work together to build the future of the IP ecosystem.

Well, the ICC and WIPO already in fact work very closely together. Historically, WIPO would host a meeting of the Commission on the 13th floor of WIPO. Well, the 13th floor has become very lonely and forlorn in these last few months, so we really hope to be able to welcome you back to the 13th floor to work together.

In the meantime, I think that this new way of working has not slowed down our cooperation. The ICC, as Ingrid has pointed out, works closely with WIPO in different ways: In the Conversation with IP and AI, in WIPO Green, WIPO Re:Search, and also lending its expertise and partnering with us in areas such as the WIPO Inventor Assistance Program and WIPO Alert.

Now, one big area in which I think we need to work together is to bring the IP ecosystem much closer to industry, enterprises, startups, small and medium enterprises, and to work with partners to help: Not just looking at IP from a legal, technical angle, but from an enterprise business angle, because it's really an area where our economies are increasingly driven by innovation.

As we look at digitalization as the new normal, IP is becoming such an important part of taking those business models and ideas to the market. I look very much forward to working with ICC very closely in these areas where we have traditionally cooperated, as well as in new areas.

In relation to the pandemic, I just want to start by saying that on behalf of all my colleagues at WIPO, we want to express our sympathy to all of those who have been affected. What we see is that the pandemic has actually accelerated a lot of trends towards technology, and digitalization and that means that even more the demand for and interest in IP will grow. And that means that the work of the Commission and the work of WIPO will be even more valuable.

And one of the ways in which I think that the pandemic has accelerated trends is in the climb of AI. In establishing the Conversation on IP in AI, we wanted to raise awareness and help stakeholders to understand the questions raised by AI as an initial way of understanding their different kinds of implications. And we wanted to take on our role as a convener to bring people together to talk about AI, how this is impacting on their areas of work, to share ideas, discuss views and propose solutions.

As for the next steps, after having three conversations, I asked my team to start to prepare a summary document covering the substantive discussions in the conversations. And

based on this summary document, we hope to be able to propose a priority list of topics for you to consider, to use in any way that you wish, whether you are a policymaker or whether you're a business association, so that we can tease out some of these broad conversations and the specific strengths.

But it's not enough, in my opinion, to just keep talking. It must lead to concrete results and practical impact. So AI is ultimately a very powerful tool, but in the end, it must be able as a tool to help us achieve our end. So as such, WIPO will pivot to work towards bringing together IP offices so that we can focus on how IP tools can support their operations, transform customer experiences and ultimately support the companies that you represent in the ICC to make it easier for you to file, to make it more intuitive for you to interact with IP offices and ultimately serve the public in different ways.

One of the things I wanted to point out is that both WIPO and ICC see some of the changes that I think are happening in the business world. And I think that's been a big part of our analysis as well. And one thing I want to point out is that there has been a shift of asset creation from tangible assets, - resources, commodities, goods, land - to intangible assets, IP, but beyond IP, trade secrets, data, know-how, expertise.

And what's happening right now is that actually intangible assets are beginning to emerge as the dominant asset class in many parts of the world.

A 2017 WIPO study showed that intangible capital contributes twice as much as tangible capital to the total value of manufactured goods. ICC has recently reorganized its IP activities around what is now called the "Innovation for All Hub". And I think that the recent 13th edition of your ICC IP Roadmap starts with a section called "Creating Value from Intellectual Property."

So I think both organizations are very well placed to look at these trends, innovation, the movement of value to intangible assets, and to see how we can work together to make sure that these trends are supportive of the interests of industry and ultimately supporters of the economic development of the Member States of WIPO.

Now, there's still a lack of awareness about IP and its value, if balanced right, for economies, to communities, and to countries. So, one of the big parts of my mission is to bring the IP message to all countries in the world, including developing countries and LDCs. Coming from Asia, coming from Southeast Asia, coming from Singapore, we've seen how much IP, if balanced right, if done wisely, can really be a tool for economic development.

Some of the areas I'm also looking forward to engaging with the ICC on are the issues of IP valuation, financing, commercialization - going beyond the traditional conversations around IP registration and enforcement - to how these issues are addressed, so that IP can get to the market and make a difference by creating jobs, driving enterprise growth, developing economies and so on, so forth.

So we want to work with ICC a lot more to see how we can help and support businesses in monetizing their intangible assets. And you want to make sure that when we talk about IP to businesses, we talk about it from a business perspective and not just from a legal perspective. So I'm counting on ICC support in this area - and beyond just certain regions of the world, as I said, I would like this to be a conversation that happens in every region in the world.

We see innovation as something in which more and more parts of the world are beginning to be interested in. Asia now files six out of 10 IP applications, Africa has hundreds of technology innovation centers. So more parts of the world are getting interested in IP and innovation and it's really becoming globalized.

So to conclude, the ICC has been around for over 100 years and it has seen upheavals and transformations more drastic, to be honest, than what we are facing now. And each time ICC has remained relevant, reinvented itself. And I think that the international IP system too has matured through different phases of history.

So I'd like us to see the pandemic not just through the lens of challenge and disruption, but also through the lens of opportunity and renewal. With that I would like to just say that WIPO at the beginning of my mandate remains very committed to working closely with IP associations, with the ICC IP Commission and with all the stakeholders to really build a future global IP ecosystem that remains relevant, vibrant and useful to our enterprises and ultimately to our economies and our peoples.

Thank you very much.