

General Statement by Japan at the 61st Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2020

First of all, the delegation of Japan would like to gratefully acknowledge Director General Francis Gurry for his leadership with deepest appreciation in contributing to the development of the world's Intellectual Property (IP) System over a long period of 12 years.

This delegation would also like to express our gratitude to the Chair of the General Assembly and the Secretariat for their dedication and efforts in organizing the General Assembly of Member States under the difficult circumstances of the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Japan would like to take this valuable opportunity to present our expectations for WIPO and the commitment of Japan.

Firstly, this delegation would like to touch upon the contribution to the global issues.

One of them is the challenges of responding to COVID-19. The global economy faced an extremely severe situation due to this pandemic. The outbreak also accelerated digital and IT transformations of our lifestyle in society, possibly most notably teleworking, while restrictions on travel and social distancing were advocated in each Member State.

With both the entire economy and society seeing massive transformation, the importance of innovation is greater than ever in addressing the growing number of social challenges as innovation is the engine that will create new businesses and generate power to help sustain economic growth.

In order to promote innovation, an appropriate balance between initiatives that foster it as well as initiatives to disseminate its outcomes is required.

We expect WIPO, as the only specialized body for IP at the United Nations, to contribute to solving global issues including the COVID-19 pandemic through promoting further innovation in order to facilitate a quicker economic recovery.

Another issue to be addressed is the achievement of the SDGs including global warming through the utilization of IP. There is WIPO GREEN as WIPO's initiative to encourage the development and diffusion of environmental technologies.

WIPO GREEN was established under the leadership of the Japan Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) and now has 115 partners. Japan's 23 partners represents the largest number of WIPO GREEN participants. Japan Patent Office became a partner of WIPO GREEN in February 2020 and we will actively contribute towards the achievement of the SDGs through the diffusion of environmental technologies.

Secondly, this delegation will refer to the adoption of the IP system in response to the rapid advancement of information and telecommunication technology. WIPO is expected to promote innovation based on new emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), contributing to building a prosperous future for the world in the years to come.

To this end, it is essential for WIPO to lead international initiatives to ensure that IP systems are appropriately responsive to technological advancement and to promote more actively the international environment for the appropriate protection and exploitation of IP in order to ensure that everyone in all Member States can enjoy benefits from innovation fairly.

Appropriate protection of new emerging technologies is vital for them to be widely disseminated. In recent years, Japan has led the development of an International Patent Classification (IPC) corresponding to IoT-related inventions and created as well as published case examples on AI-related inventions. We would like to share the knowledge and experiences Japan has gained through these initiatives in the discussions on new emerging technologies led by WIPO.

Thirdly, this delegation would like to mention enhanced convenience for users.

Enhancing user convenience is essential for WIPO mainly because most of its income comes from user fees.

For example, it would be desirable to further expand communication between WIPO and its customers in order to reflect their voices to WIPO initiatives. Listening to their opinions would also enable us to make the international application system and the information provided by WIPO more user-friendly. Since Japan has world's leading international applicants, this delegation believes that Japan can significantly contribute to the improvement of WIPO's initiatives by receiving input from those users through WIPO Japan office, for instance.

In addition, efforts to broaden the user base are necessary so that people around the world, who are engaged in innovation and creation, will become WIPO users.

To this end, it is necessary to further enhance the contents and the interfaces that are simple yet practical for SMEs including startups and individuals who are unfamiliar with the IP system.

Fourthly, this delegation will touch upon the reinforcement of IP infrastructure through capacity building and the development of IT systems.

In the future, Japan believes that businesses in various countries will increasingly diversify their overseas operations. This implies an increase in the diversity of countries

and regions where companies acquire and exploit IP. It is essential that WIPO serves as a bridge between developed and developing countries, while working with each member state to promote more actively the international environment for the appropriate protection and exploitation of IP in order to ensure that the people in our member states can enjoy benefits from innovation fairly.

With the above mentioned expectations for WIPO in mind, Japan will continue to support the initiatives of WIPO through the voluntary contributions it has made for more than 30 years.

Last but not least, Japan congratulates Mr. Daren Tang, on his appointment to Director General. This delegation is confident that new Director General will take the lead in moving WIPO to the next chapter and realizing an inclusive, balanced, vibrant, and forward-looking Global IP Ecosystem that he mentioned in his acceptance speech.

Japan also plans to disseminate information about IP at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka. Including conducting those awareness-raising activities, we will continue to cooperate with WIPO and actively contribute to the development of the IP Ecosystem.