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WORLD INTELLECTUAL  
PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

## **WIPO REGIONAL SEMINAR ON INVENTION AND INNOVATION IN AFRICA**

organized by  
the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)  
in cooperation with  
the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

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**DEVELOPMENT BY COLLABORATION**

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In the recent past, there has been no shortage of vigorous statements about the squalid state of poor communities and the state of the disadvantaged as regards education, career opportunities and participation in the decisions of public life. Many governments have instituted broad policy reforms aimed at reducing this disadvantage and such reforms are essential for the future economic development. But policy reforms alone cannot guarantee the rapid and sustained growth needed to pull our majority - the poor, out of poverty. In order to achieve the basis economic soundness - low inflation, low budget deficits and competitive exchange rates - that is needed for growth to take off and poverty to fall, the extent of policy reforms must encompass the invention and innovation sector in addition to the traditional macroeconomic trade and agricultural policies. This was the idea stressed by the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire during the opening ceremony two days ago.

Over the economic policy reforms, other initiatives needed to shift the world into a faster development track to include improving people's health and education, developing adequate infrastructure and providing stronger institutions and better governance. This must not only involve a new financial framework but also an appropriate reorientation of development strategies with the aim of strengthening the private sector and emphasising on investing in productive areas, producing quality goods and employing the skills of the local people.

Ladies and gentlemen, 15 years ago in KENYA a growing realisation of this lack of basic infrastructure and indigenous capability to address local science and technology needs for sustainable growth and development, led to the inception of the Inventors and Innovators Association of KENYA (IIAK), which is a professional organisation. It was formed to cater to innovation, reward those who do well and encourage those whose poverty cannot allow them to venture on their own. Fifteen years later, the need to increase indigenous human resource skills and local institutional capacity in the application of technology, is today, even higher. A considerable amount of talent and ideas still remain untapped, however the IIAK is determined to achieve better results in the new millennium by living up to one principle: that of long-term commitment to attract attention only by ever better quality production and to think highly of lasting value than that of short term publicity.

The main purpose of IIAK is to raise the output of people and organisations especially in KENYA by mobilising their knowledge and skills, or creating the conditions for their use. It aims to support the people in using their own initiatives so that they can improve their living conditions by their own collaborative efforts. For it is true that most poor people often have so much need, but the time has come for us to realise that they too have quite so much to give.

As everywhere in development work, the rule remains: that development cannot and should not be imposed on people. Real prosperity is brought about by how much people are allowed to do by themselves. In fact, it is readily evident that imported development projects often create islands of progress which have to wither away if the local people do not have the capacity to follow the modern examples or if there are no companies to employ the accrued skilled personnel left behind. In KENYA, such skilled people often create their own enterprises as a form of self-determination or self-employment and are referred to as the UA KALI.

Unfortunately, such initiatives are isolated and have only improved the lot of a few people. To achieve more widespread results, the IIAK has begun developing networked programmes for efficient production, servicing and long term maintenance with committed cooperation of the beneficiaries of projects. The idea is to take advantage of local resources and innovative capacity in a sustainable way to meet our basic needs, create jobs and to establish a legacy of industrial self-determination.

I hope you will agree with me that such pion objectives can only be achieved when granted to men and women of courage vision and the capacity to generate ideas and to organise people. Fortunately, the professional nature of our organisation complemented with the existence of the global coordinating body IFIA along side WIPO provides the appropriate conditions for the development of such objectives and for real global prosperity.

As a professional organisation, IIAK is well placed to provide some insight on how to exploit the tremendous opportunities created by the global economic growth and in dealing with the complex managerial demands arising from the scale and scope of those opportunities. Its major objectives are:

(1) to identify and recover all local innovations from all parts of our society for proper documentation. The resulting database is critically essential for innovative intellectual input in order to build a credible capacity for industrial prosperity;

(2) to promote appreciation of intellectual property by appropriate recognition of inventor's solutions as equivalent PhD. materials. Especially during university graduation ceremonies;

(3) to entrance potential manufacturing capacity by working with innovator's to extend their skills beyond product development in order to include such activities as conducting market research, developing efficient production lines, training and qualifying sales and support persons and to seek alternatives for diversity. The target is to raise ambitions and to help the innovators get more creative in their search for ways to increase profits by bridging the gaps between innovative capabilities and business expectations;

(4) to provide meaningful teaching points of view by redesigning or creating educational and industrial information in the form of textbooks or manuals. These should go along side specific prescription of scientific experiments based on locally manufactured equipment.

(5) to collaborate with industrial establishments, research institutions, investors and governments in establishing joint ventures with regard for the economic opportunities resulting from their achievements. The aim is to eliminate making proposals that are deemed politically correct or academically prestigious but that are completely unsound development wise.

(6) to facilitate the interaction between professional researchers and grassroots innovators and to encourage both parties to appreciate the need to write down what they know and to create more reusable knowledge that can be shared. Parallel to this is the need to standardise methods of production as marketing methods of production, as a marketing strategy for faster economic gains through mass production;

(7) to inform and enlighten the public through seminar and short courses on the latest options especially on information technology. This is essential if they are to develop the necessary competitive intelligence and to capture the full picture of making informed business decisions. People who make choices on emerging opportunities without seeing the full picture often get politicised or confused about priorities. At the individual level IIAK encourages the optimisation in the use of talents or skills as the principal component in the choice and development of careers in order to make the greatest contribution to the general development of our societies.

(8) to evaluate performance and encourage optimisation of capabilities in business enterprises by encouraging managers to go beyond tactical moves such as cutting costs, postponing investments and reshuffling management and to rather embrace analytical entrepreneurship and competitive alternatives in their internal organisation as the critical components for the long term consequences of their business. One interesting finding over the years is that enterprises still managed by their founders seem to do better than those led by second-generation owners who do not seem to cope well with crisis; it is for this reason that IIAK now targets the non-founders for exposure on the reality of their expectations, and business returns by helping them to rethink their attitudes towards regulations and competition.

(9) to collaborate with other international organisations with similar interests as a means to facilitate faster formulation of solutions to our common needs and to harmonise the adoption of international protocol on intellectual property rights and patenting regulations.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have come together at this seminar over these objectives, with high hopes and future dreams for our development. But more fundamentally, we have all come together for one purpose - to strengthen our resolve to transform knowledge and skills into tangible development, to fight poverty and to create jobs for our people. Such a sense of solidarity cannot permit those who are creative and privileged to ignore those who are disadvantaged. We have the resources, the tools and the ideas. Let us use them. Let us do whatever it takes to succeed in transforming hopes into action and thus change the course of our history once and for all.

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