

## **Seminar on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources**

**Closing remarks by Mr. Wend Wendland,  
Director, Traditional Knowledge Division**

**January 22, 2021**

We have now come to the end of this Seminar on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources.

First, I would like to thank her Excellency Ambassador Socorro Flores Liera, Mrs. Hilda Al-Hinai and Professor Margo Bagley for having excellently moderated the roundtable discussions. You each did a fantastic job in introducing the issues and guiding the discussions.

I would also like to thank our 14 speakers for their enriching presentations and interventions. You made this virtual seminar a dynamic and engaging event.

In the past three days, we had the pleasure of having over 300 attendees per day, either through the *Interprefy* platform or through the live webcast.

This seminar has addressed some of the most important and outstanding issues being negotiated at the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC).

Over the course of three days, we have had insightful historical accounts of how these issues have evolved on the international level over many decades; we've learned about national experiences in and proposals from Switzerland, New Zealand, the United States of

America, the Russian Federation, Indonesia, Colombia and the Philippines; we've heard the views of industry and the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples; we've learned about new data mining and machine learning techniques that can unlock and decode more and more empirical information about the patent system; and we've learned about the new technologies, such as DSI, that are disrupting current business models and legal frameworks.

We've also heard interesting ideas, such as a 1% user charge, a disclosure *statement*, strengthening IP clauses in ABS agreements, and the more systematic use of databases and other information systems by patent examiners, although we have also heard important concerns about these.

A number of speakers referred to the "Chair's text", that is, the text that was tabled, under his own authority, by the IGC Chair Ian Goss in April 2019.

Even though Seminars like these do not formally form part of the IGC process, they contribute directly to it, by creating a space for the sharing of empirical information, the exchange of perspectives and the floating of new ideas. These Seminars also foster an evidence-based approach to the work of the IGC and help to narrow gaps.

In conclusion, I hope that, even if the IGC may not meet formally for a while, there can and will be an active intersessional process that contributes to the work of the IGC. There is already an ongoing online commenting process, and further briefings, seminars and expert group meetings will be organized. A lot of useful work can be done while waiting for the IGC sessions to resume. This virtual Seminar has shown that virtual events such as these can work.

I hope to see you all in our next events.

I thank Assistant Director General Edward Kwakwa who leads our Sector, and thank my own team for the outstanding organization what went into this Seminar, the team being led by Fei Jiao. Thank you too to the Conference Services team led by Elizabeth March and Janice Driscoll and to the interpreters.

Thank you again all moderators, speakers and attendees very much for your participation and attention.

I now close the Seminar and wish you all a good weekend.

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