

# WIPO



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**WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION**  
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## **PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**First Session**  
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PROMOTION OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

*Prepared by the International Bureau*

## INTRODUCTION

1. The history of humanity has taught us that innovation, knowledge and information are among the most important components of successful development. The systematic application of organized knowledge and information can generate technology and produce solutions to existing problems. Inventions represent new, non-obvious solutions to technical problems and as such they are one of the components of technology. Innovations, based on new inventions and technologies have proved to be decisive factors in industrial and economic development. Inventions and related technologies are becoming more and more the objects of trade and business negotiations between corporations and between countries. Any company controlling its own inventions and technologies will enjoy competitive advantage in this highly industrialized world.
2. The support, encouragement and development of domestic technological and innovative capacities represents an important element of development policy and in many countries the patent system has served as breeding ground for numerous inventions and innovations that have been at the origin of many industries and employment.
3. Inventions and innovations however are not natural occurrences. Therefore, technological development will not take place unless some kind of dedicated strategy is initiated to stimulate its occurrence. The industrial property system was established to support such a strategy.
4. Promoting, encouraging and rewarding creative endeavor is the very *raison d'être* of the intellectual property system. This has also always been the principal mandate of WIPO. The protection of intellectual property rights only will be insufficient to make the system relevant for economic development. It is necessary that the intellectual property system is understood and used by all users: individual inventors, researchers, SMEs and R&D organizations, universities, writers, artists, performers, software programmers, etc.
5. An individual or a company will be able to benefit fully from the advantages offered by the intellectual property system, only if they understand the functioning of the system and how to use it.

## WIPO AND THE PROMOTION OF THE USE OF THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEM

6. The current WIPO Program and Budget commits WIPO to further extend its programs aimed at encouraging and rewarding inventive and creative endeavor in developing countries.
7. At the last session of the WIPO Assemblies, the Member States emphasized the importance of developing the intellectual property system in such a way that could maximize economic and social benefits and take full account of a nation's current and potential intellectual property assets. In this context, the cooperation for development will extend to broader economic and trade interest, as well as to other matters of interest and concern to

developing countries, such as indigenous cultures, traditional knowledge, biodiversity, licensing and other technology-transfer arrangements, use of industrial property information for research, development and technology transfer, new or innovative approaches to alternative dispute resolution and more effective IPR enforcement mechanisms.

8. Greater possibilities for using intellectual property in industrial, social, cultural and environmental development, and the broadening user base, have accentuated calls on intellectual property offices to modernize, simplify and expand public services, and to provide access to technological, legal and other information. Today national intellectual property offices can be considered as service providers, since they offer a variety of services to a large community of users – private persons, companies, R&D organizations, other government entities, universities, etc.

9. While focusing on the long term, it is imperative to develop activities that create indigenous capacity to meet future challenges. WIPO's activities will seek to facilitate and encourage integration of the intellectual property system into national economic, cultural, technological and social development, to create sustainable institutions and in particular to support and encourage indigenous innovation and creativity to serve national development goals.

10. WIPO's cooperation for development program responds to the growing international awareness and recognition that the effective protection and proper use of IPRs contribute to economic development, manifested through successful access to global export markets, enhanced domestic competitiveness and productivity, increased creation, application and transfer of new technologies, and more effective incentives for investment in creativity and innovation.

11. Innovation is a very complex process and it is influenced and conditioned by a variety of factors and elements, such as the education system, the working environment, the economic environment, the financial system, the social and cultural environment, etc. Inventions and innovations do not just happen: they are the result of long and tedious efforts of researchers, inventors, scientists and engineers and technicians, working in R&D organizations, universities, small and large companies, in industry, etc. Every effort to influence one or another part of the innovation process must take into consideration the various elements and actors involved in it.

12. As a key element of the national infrastructure for long-term industrial, economic and technological viability, a sound intellectual property system must link a country's innovative and productive energies with technological and commercial activities, thus promoting, in the long run, stable sustainable economic growth and human resources development.

#### WIPO'S PROGRAM FOR PROMOTION OF INVENTION AND INNOVATION

13. Since the late 70s WIPO has carried out work on a number of activities concerning the promotion of inventive and innovative activity in the framework of its development cooperation program.

14. The importance of these activities led in May 1998, to the creation of the Innovation Promotion Section, which recently became the Division for Infrastructure Services and Innovation Promotion. Its objective is to develop and implement the WIPO program and activities for promotion and encouragement of inventive and innovative activities in cooperation with the WIPO Regional Bureaus and other divisions and units of the Organization.

15. These activities focus on the users of the intellectual property system in developing and countries in transition, including inventors, researchers, businessmen, investors, innovation managers, technology managers working in SMEs, R&D organizations, universities, etc. Special efforts are made to facilitate the use of the intellectual property system by disadvantaged groups such as women, youth and other members of the community who should also benefit from intellectual property protection.

16. Particular attention is given to the creation of awareness about the benefits and use of the intellectual property system. The objective is to encourage active use and management of intellectual property rights, including assessment of intellectual property rights and resources, development of inventions and technology transfer, improving conditions for development and commercialization of indigenous inventions and other intellectual property creations. For that purpose the program will support the establishment and development of national infrastructures for the support of invention and innovation, such as innovation centers, intellectual property service and information centers (e.g. with chambers of commerce and industry), etc.

17. The program will also address the need for strengthening users' organizations (NGOs), such as inventors associations or organizations of patent and trademark practitioners or agents, and encourage international cooperation among such users organizations.

18. The objective of WIPO's activities aimed at encouraging the promotion of inventive and creative activity, is to create and widen opportunities for inventors, researchers, enterprises and R&D organizations of developing countries, to offer the results of their creative work (inventions, research results, software, services, etc.), to national industries and thus to contribute to the economic and social progress, and, at the same time, to better protect and commercialize their intellectual property in the international marketplace.

19. The main objectives of this WIPO program and activities could be summarized as follows:

- to promote protection and exploitation of indigenous creations and innovations;
- to establish and strengthen user organizations;
- to offer skills and knowledge enabling users to assess the commercial and market value of inventions and other creations;

- to equip user organizations with the right information, tools, techniques and strategies for protecting and exploiting their intellectual property assets; and
- to expand and improve the quality of the public's knowledge of intellectual property.

It is expected that the program will produce the following results:

- wider use of the intellectual property system by users from developing countries;
- greater use of industrial property information in research and development;
- facilitation of the commercialization of inventions created in developing countries;
- stronger user organizations, in particular inventors' associations and copyright collective management societies; and
- improved public knowledge and greater integration of an informed approach to intellectual property in a wide range of economic and social sectors.

## RECENT WIPO ACTIVITIES CONCERNING PROMOTION OF INVENTION AND INNOVATION

20. Subjects related to invention and innovation, commercialization and assessment of innovations, etc. are being given ever greater attention in WIPO seminars, workshops and meetings. Such meetings are an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas, experience and contacts between inventors, researchers and managers and other professional groups involved in inventive and innovative activities, namely governmental authorities, research and development institutions, industry and business, universities, etc. The programs of a number of recent WIPO meetings (in Burkina Faso, Niger, Benin, Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Oman, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, China, India, Ukraine) and sessions of the WIPO Academy have included one or more subjects related to the promotion of inventive and innovative activities.

21. Since 1984 WIPO has regularly organized international conferences on questions of topical interest to inventors. Usually, these conferences are organized jointly with the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA) and they coincide with IFIA's General Assemblies, held every second year. The last joint WIPO-IFIA Symposium took place in Budapest, in March 1998, where more than 130 participants from over 40 countries discussed different aspects of the impact of new information technologies on inventive activities. The Hungarian Patent Office and the Association of Hungarian Inventors demonstrated the usefulness of industrial property information and the Internet for inventors and innovators in support of their development and commercialization efforts.

22. The Government of Argentina and the Association of Argentine Inventors have invited WIPO and IFIA to hold their next international conference for inventors in Buenos Aires next year.

23. Last November an important WIPO Regional Seminar on Support Services for Inventors, Valuation and Commercialization of Inventions and Research Results was held in Manila, in the context of National Inventor's Week. The Seminar attracted over 80 participants from Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Finland, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Switzerland, Thailand and Viet Nam. Participants included government officials, representatives of inventors' organizations and industry, as well as academics and researchers.

24. A new feature of WIPO's Innovation Promotion Program is to provide assistance in the creation of innovation centers or innovation support services in developing countries and countries in transition. In preparation of such assistance, WIPO commissioned two studies on the practical aspects of the creation of innovation centers in developing countries, which were prepared by experts from Australia and USA, respectively.

25. Several countries have expressed their interest in benefiting from WIPO's assistance in the creation of national invention and innovation support structures or to share experience acquired at the national level. Among these are: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Madagascar, Philippines, Senegal, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

26. In supporting one or another country in the creation, development or strengthening of invention and innovation support structures, WIPO hopes that the experience gained will make for wider cooperation among developing countries on innovation-related matters. WIPO will support and facilitate the exchange and transfer of experience between innovation promotion and support structures in different countries, in particular among developing countries.

27. On the occasion of the 1998 WIPO-IFIA International Symposium in Budapest WIPO initiated the launch of an Internet discussion site called INVLINK. That Internet discussion facility was created with the technical support of the Hungarian Patent Office and was used in the preparation of some of the discussions of the International Symposium in Budapest. The experiment showed that such a discussion site, if moderated actively, could be an excellent communication tool for the inventors' community. WIPO has contacted several associations of inventors and discussed their active involvement in the future use of the INVLINK discussion site.

28. The oldest WIPO program for encouraging inventive and innovative activity is the WIPO Gold Medal Awards for Inventors, which was initiated in 1979. During the past 20 years, 512 medals have been awarded to inventors from 75 countries, 46 of which were developing countries. To encourage inventive and innovative activities in Africa, WIPO has initiated in cooperation with the OAU, the OAU-WIPO Invention Award for African

Inventors. Since 1988, this OAU-WIPO Invention Award has been bestowed upon the winners on the occasion of the OAU Summit sessions, held every second year.

29. WIPO encourages developing countries to organize invention and innovation competitions and exhibitions at national or regional levels. These are excellent opportunities not only for inventors and innovators to meet the public and potential partners for the development and use of their creations, but also for promoting knowledge about and the use of the intellectual property system. Recently, last April, WIPO had an information stand at the Afro-Arab Trade Fair, organized by the OAU and the League of Arab States in Dakar, Senegal.

30. At present a new WIPO trophy scheme for innovative enterprises is being initiated with the objective to encourage small and medium enterprises to actively use the intellectual property system in their production and commercial activities.

31. In implementing the various activities, increasing use will be made of information technologies, the IPDL (Intellectual Property Digital Libraries) and the Internet. The active use of information technology today is an indispensable feature in WIPO's activities. The Member States have agreed to invest a considerable amount of resources in building-up the WIPO Global Information Network (WIPO<sub>NET</sub>) in close cooperation with all national administrations - patent, trademark, copyright offices, - so that we will be able to disseminate worldwide legal, technological and business information and to attract more users of the IP system from an increased number of countries. The Internet and the Worldwide Web are valuable and profoundly indispensable facilities in the establishment, the creation and the implementation of this large-scale project known as the WIPO<sub>NET</sub>.

## FUTURE ACTIVITIES

32. To assist member States in meeting the future challenges by using the creative and innovative talents of their people, and in line with the mandate and the objectives of its future program, WIPO will:

- design, develop and implement cost-effective activities with a long-term focus on creating indigenous capacity to meet future national development challenges, in particular, to enhance the management of intellectual property rights by creators, inventors, researchers and SMEs of developing countries;
- develop and implement programs and projects aimed at the creation of national and regional invention and innovation support structures, which will provide legal and technical support to inventors, researchers, R&D organizations and innovative SMEs in developing countries;
- provide assistance in setting-up national creativity and innovation promotion programs;

- provide assistance in establishing structures for the assessment and valuation of inventions and research results (at the national level), their technical feasibility, market and commercialization potential;
- encourage and assist in the exploitation of intellectual property assets for national development (including identification and selection of technological strategies based on patent information, patenting strategies for SMEs, commercialization of innovations and inventions, licensing and transfer of technology, use of trademarks, geographical indications and industrial designs for product development and market penetration);
- assist in establishing and strengthening users' organizations such as inventors associations or innovation centers, associations of SMEs or chambers of commerce;
- maintain contacts and develop cooperation with regional associations of inventors, with the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA), and with associations or groupings of innovation centers or similar organizations (e.g. the Association of University Technology Managers, the European Innovation Center Network, etc.);
- provide assistance to and cooperate with organizers of exhibitions of inventions and new technologies, invention competitions, and creativity contests;
- develop and operate specific IP services for individual inventors, researchers and SMEs (facilitate access of inventors, researchers and SMEs in developing countries to patent information, advise on technological information services related to industrial property and available on the Internet, state-of-the-art technology, preparation of technology profiles, etc.);
- operate and further develop the WIPO Gold Medal Awards Scheme for Inventors and Innovative Enterprises;
- create and maintain a web page on the Innovation Program including active use of the INVLINK discussion site, as a tool for better communication with inventors and innovators worldwide.

*33. The Permanent Committee is invited to note the information contained in this document and make any comment it may wish on the content thereof.*

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