

Baroness Neville-Rolfe Speech
WIPO Roving Seminar, 6th October 2014, London

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I'm delighted to be here to open the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) Roving Seminars in the UK and to do so at the British Library. This is one of the world's truly great libraries, a wonderful mix of old and new. Its collection of some 150 million items displays knowledge and creativity drawn from all corners of the globe, preserving that intellectual memory for generations to come. That makes it an excellent place to host our colleagues from WIPO, who play such a crucial role in protecting intellectual property and stimulating its creation all around the world.

It's also great to be here in London, the largest city in the UK and a global economic centre. But it's important to go beyond the capital and I'm pleased that you're also taking these Roving Seminars to Manchester, with its world leading university and innovative businesses. And then on to Glasgow. Their hugely successful hosting of the Commonwealth Games earlier this year is testament to the city's dynamism.

Let me tell you a little about myself. Before becoming a Minister, I worked in business for 17 years and also spent over 20 years as a civil servant in agriculture, business and at No 10 Downing Street. I have held senior positions in international retail, television and food and chaired a small company so I understand what it takes to run an effective business. I now lead on business issues in the House of Lords.

I want to say a few words about the importance of IP for global trade, and the fundamental role that WIPO plays in linking the

two. During my time in business I worked in many markets and dealt with numerous suppliers from around the world. This showed me how important it is for trade to flow and for businesses to get international protection for their IP rights. A proper understanding of WIPO services is crucial to that.

Here in the UK, we continue to take steps to strengthen the environment for innovation and ensure that it reflects the needs of 21st century businesses and creators. WIPO's own Global Innovation Index recently ranked the UK's innovation performance second out of more than 140 countries around the world and Taylor Wessing's Global IP Index judged the UK to be the best place in the world to obtain, exploit and enforce IP rights. We want to build on this success domestically. But In the modern, globalising world I recognise that we must look to develop the global framework for IP at the same time.

And that's where WIPO comes in. We know your services are well used by UK companies:

- Almost 5,000 Patent Cooperation Treaty applications in 2012, amounting to almost 19,000 national and regional patent applications.
- Over 2,000 Madrid system registrations in 2013, amounting to almost 16,000 national trade mark applications.

To give an example of an organisation that uses these services, University College London, just around the corner from here, made some 41 PCT applications in 2013. Companies like Spey medical, also just a stone's throw away, rely heavily on WIPO services. Their 28 Madrid Trade Mark Applications in 2013 put them in the top 50 Madrid filers globally, and ensured they were able to effectively strengthen their brand position. In 2012, Tesco, during my last year at the

company, filed 39 Madrid applications, putting us in the top 25 filers globally.

Some of the most notable inventors of the last half-century have sought their patent protection through the PCT. Take Dr Alec Jeffreys, who discovered the DNA fingerprint in his lab in Leicester in the 1980s and developed effective DNA profiling techniques. He and his colleagues were able to protect their innovations in Japan, the US, and 16 European states, all through one PCT application. The equivalent process for individual patent applications would have been far more onerous.

We must also look forward and with Francis Gurry re-elected for a second six-year term as Director General, it is a good time to consider where WIPO's focus should lie.

I believe that WIPO should play an active role in supporting innovative technologies. Initiatives such as WIPO Green, which complements UK policies to support patent applications for green technology, should be encouraged. The UK also supports the establishment of a network of WIPO external offices in strategic locations around the world. These offices will expand WIPO's reach into emerging markets and encourage respect for IP globally. Work on respect for IP is crucial for the protection of copyrighted works on the internet and in order to stem the flow of counterfeit goods into our markets. Indeed during a very constructive UK IP mission to China last month, IP law, enforcement and education as well as copyright and counterfeits were on our agenda. And I was able to agree with Chinese Ministers just what an important step it was to have WIPO opening in Beijing.

Because of my experience in both Government and business, I am especially delighted that WIPO continues to look to its users for guidance. Uniquely amongst UN organisations, WIPO gets the vast majority of its funding – 95 per cent – from fee-paying

customers. From applicants to the Madrid system and the Patent Cooperation Treaty, or in other words, from many of you in this room today. It is crucial that the businesses, universities and individuals that make use of WIPO services are able to influence how those services are run.

This programme of roving seminars by WIPO is a crucial part of that process and I hope you have a successful week of events in the UK.

And of course I'm pleased that all of you have taken the time to come and hear from WIPO. I would urge you to join in the debate today, and in the future, to continue make sure WIPO hear from you as well.

Thank you. I'll now hand over to Mr Yo Takagi, distinguished not only for all he has done at WIPO, but also for his achievements in patents and foreign affairs in Japan. Mr Takagi.